

2 Home & Middle East News

Jordan Times, Thursday-Friday, December 4-5, 1997.

Over 280 die in latest Algerian violence — papers

PARIS (R) — More than 280 Algerians, mostly suspected Islamist rebels, have been killed in clashes and attacks in the past few days in four areas of Algeria, national newspapers said on Wednesday.

Among the dead were four members of one family, including a seven-year-old boy, who had their throats cut on Tuesday when gunmen stormed their home south of the Algerian capital.

Le Matin newspaper, widely known for its staunch support for the government security forces, said 250 rebels died in the past few days in clashes between main guerrilla rivals, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA).

It said the battles pitting members of the AIS against the GIA took place in the Mitidja farming area, south of Algiers.

They followed the AIS declaration of an Oct. 1 ceasefire in operations against Algerian security forces, which the GIA dismissed as sell-out of the Islamist struggle.

Le Matin did not say what brought such a number of rival rebels to this area, known as stronghold of GIA, and there was no independent confirmation.

The AIS and GIA carved out their strongholds around the origins of their founders. The GIA overwhelms rivals in Algiers and other central areas as well as in most western provinces.

The AIS is mostly based in northern and eastern provinces.

Meanwhile, troops continued their ninth day of a siege of more than 100 rebels entrenched in a camp at the intersection of two mountains near Larbaa, 25 kilometres south of Algiers, the newspapers said.

Liberte said the troops, backed by air force commandos, tightened their encirclement of the camp it called a "strategic base" for the GIA.

Helicopter gunships intensified the bombardment of the base, it said adding that troops were unable to storm it because of the rugged terrain and mines planted by the rebels.

Constantine, the main city in eastern Algeria.

Algerian newspapers said suspected Islamist guerrillas have stepped up attacks in villages and some cities to try to loosen the military grip on besieged comrades in the Mitidja.

More than 200 civilians have been killed in attacks, mostly in Mitidja and south of Oran, since the Oct. 23 local elections in parallel to the killing of 180 gunmen by security forces, according to toll gathered from Algerian reports.

More than 65,000 people have died in Algeria's violence since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election in which Islamists had taken a huge lead.

Qatari emir travels to Riyadh, hopes to meet Mubarak

RIYADH (AFP) — Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Thani, arrived in the Saudi capital on Wednesday hoping to meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to reconcile their two countries.

The emir was welcomed at the airport by King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz, witnesses said.

"I am travelling to Saudi Arabia to meet my brothers King Fahd and President Hosni Mubarak so as to settle any misunderstanding," Sheikh Hamad said on his departure from Doha, quoted by the official news agency QNA.

He voiced "regrets for what has happened" between Qatar and Egypt, while thanking the Saudi

king and its Prince Abdullah for their mediation efforts.

Arab diplomats said President Mubarak was also due in Riyadh later on Wednesday, as part of the Saudi effort to reconcile Doha and Cairo.

Ties between the two Arab capitals have deteriorated since Cairo's boycott of the Middle East econom-

ic conference in Doha last month because of the participation of Israel.

And Qatar's Foreign Minister Hamad Ben Jasssem Ben Jaber Thani has drawn flak from Egypt since he accused it of backing a failed coup attempt in Doha in 1996, a charge denied by Cairo.

The foreign minister travelled to Riyadh with the

emir.

Egypt's Foreign Minister Amr Musa visited Riyadh on Tuesday for talks with Prince Abdullah, shortly after a Saudi minister of state delivered a message to President Mubarak.

The official, Abdul Aziz Ben Abdullah Khaweer, called for Egypt and Qatar to settle their dispute.



REMEMBERING FALLEN TOURISTS: Egyptian tour guides release doves during a gathering outside the Hatshepsut Temple Wednesday in memory of the 60 tourists slain in a massacre on Nov. 17. Some 1,000 Egyptian tour guides gathered at the site of the massacre to mourn one of their slain colleague (AFP photo).

'UNSCOM members should travel by land'

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq should not allow U.N. arms inspectors to fly in and out of the country but force them to take the long overland route to Jordan, an official daily said Wednesday.

The U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of dismantling Iraq's nuclear programme, which is impossible to please them all.

Some 872,000 Muslims and 190,000 Christians live in Iraq, which has a total population of 5.8 million. Muslims make up 14.9 per cent of the population and the Christians 3.2 per cent.

Bishop Marcuzzo said programmes for the Muslims have not been cut. "I am happy for our Muslim brothers," he said, "but this is a clear case of religious discrimination."

Mr. Schayek said Israel Radio still broadcasts services on the main Christian festivals, but "the Chris-

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Women fined and whipped for protest in Sudan

KHARTOUM (AFP) — A Khartoum court has fined 37 Sudanese women for staging an illegal protest over compulsory military service for students, as well as fining their lawyer, a government newspaper reported Wednesday.

The court late Monday fined the women \$6 each and had 12 of them whipped, while the defence lawyer was fined \$300, the Al Arab daily said.

The report was the first official reference to a demonstration in which over 70 women, according to witnesses, marched towards the U.N. Khartoum offices to lodge their protest against the sending last September of a number of high school students to the war front against rebels in south Sudan.

They were blocked by riot police who arrested 37 women and took them to the public order tribunal late Monday night and gave 12 of them 10 lashes each, in addition to the \$6 fine. According to the official daily, the tribunal found the women guilty of "instigating riot."

Roman Catholic bishop accuses Israel Radio of discrimination

TEL AVIV (AP) — A senior Roman Catholic clergyman said Wednesday that Israel's state-owned radio discriminated against the Christian minority because it cut a religious affairs programme.

In September 1996, the monthly one-hour programme by the Roman Catholic church on Israel Radio's Arabic service was cancelled, said Bishop Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo, a representative of the Latin patriarch in Jerusalem.

Other Christian denominations were given less airtime, the bishop told the Associated Press.

The head of Israel Radio's Arabic Service, Edmund Schayek, said the cuts are due to budgetary pressures and that religious programmes for Israel's Muslim minority, which is much larger than the Christian community, have also been cut for the same reason.

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Right-wing Knesset members sign appeal to save peace process

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Eighteen members of parliament from Israel's ruling right-wing coalition issued an appeal Wednesday to "revive the peace process" and carry out a new troop withdrawal from the West Bank.

Seeking to counter the

far-right nationalist faction in government, the 18 said they would back a conditional proposal by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to transfer more land to Palestinian rule.

The Knesset initiative was launched by Roman Bronfman of the Russian

immigrant party Israel B'Aliya and includes primarily deputies from his group and two other moderate factions in parliament — Foreign Minister David Levy's Geshet Party and the Third Way of Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani.

But two members of Mr. Netanyahu's nationalist Likud bloc also signed the appeal, including the party whip Meir Sheerit.

The 18 issued their appeal to counter threats by a "Greater Israel Front" of nationalist deputies who have pledged to topple the

government if it carries out any further troop withdrawals from Palestinian areas.

The front claims to have the support of more than 10 deputies, enough to erode Mr. Netanyahu's six-seat majority in the 120-member Knesset.

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Jordan Television
Tel. 773111-19
PROGRAMME TWO

Thursday Programmes

14:10 "The World of Peter Rabbit"

14:30 "My Little Fairy Tale"

15:00 America's Funniest People

15:30 "He Shoots, He Scores"

16:00 "National Geographic"

16:30 The Prince and the Pauper

17:00 French Programmes

19:00 "News in French"

19:15 French Programmes

19:30 "News Headlines"

19:35 Trivial Pursuit

20:00 The Parenthood

20:30 Lois and Clark

21:10 "Oprah Winfrey Show"

22:00 "News in English"

22:30 "Feature Film"

23:59 "Music Show"

Friday Programmes

14:10 The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin

14:30 The New Fred and Barney Show

15:00 "Wishbone"

15:30 "Lucky Luke"

16:00 "Family Matters"

16:20 Doc. — "Natural Wonders of Europe"

17:00 French Programmes

19:30 "News Headlines"

19:35 Doc. — "Life on the Internet"

20:00 Comedy — "Are You Being Served"

20:30 "Brisco County"

21:00 "Doc. — "English"

22:10 "News in Horizon"

22:30 "Mini-series"

23:15 "Feature Film"

JORDAN TIMES

PRAYER TIMES

04:53 "Fajr"

06:15 (Sunrise) Dhuha

11:26 Dhuhr

14:13 "Asr"

16:36 Maghreb

17:58 "Isha"

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church Tel. 5516245

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise slightly. Skies partly cloudy, and winds westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

YESTERDAY'S HIGH TEMPERATURES:

Amman 16, Aqaba 24 Humidity readings: Amman 26 per cent, Aqaba 46 per cent.

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 627777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 643402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 681100

Jordan Electricity Authority

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mazen Nihal 830435

Dr. Faysal Dabbas 759155

Dr. Adnan Zuhair 598140

Dr. Fakhri Bilal 661912

Firas pharmacy 778336

Ferdows pharmacy 637055

Al Asma pharmacy 623672

Naironah pharmacy 636739

Al Salam pharmacy 644445

Yacoub pharmacy 637601

Shreevani pharmacy 637601

AMMAN:

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484

Al Quds pharmacy 4—4

ZARQA:

Dr. Zuhour Al Qadri 906606

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity 6442816

Akileh Maternity 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malluk, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 610701

Shmeisani Hospital 6469131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Mousher Hospital 6672279

The Islamic, Abdali 6612637

Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641046

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7771013

Al-Bashir 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/94

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09983323

Zarqa National Hospital 09900860

Ben Sina Hospital 09986732

Al Hikmah Modern Hospital 09994991

IRBID:

Princess Baena Hospital 021275555

Greek Catholic Hospital 02127275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital 021247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital 03314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified.

Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08 (53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15 "Sanaa (RJ)"

08:25 "Bombay (RJ)"

09:15 "Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)"

09:30 "New Delhi (RJ)"

10:05 "Muscat, Dubai (RJ)"

10:05 "Beirut (RJ)"

10:15 "Doha, Bahrain (RJ)"

10:15 "Colombo (RJ)"

15:00 "New York, Amsterdam (RJ)"

16:25 "London (RJ)"

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(For Thursday and Friday)

07:45 "Aqaba (RW)"

09:05 "Amman (QALIA) (RW)"

09:50 "Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)"

17:20 "Tel Aviv (RW)"

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00:35 "Amsterdam (KL)"

03:00 "Athens (OA)"

06:40 "Beirut, London (BA)"

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17:30 "Rome (AZ)"

21:20 "Tel Aviv (LY)"

21:40 "Cairo (MS)"

Queen attends fund-raising event for new rehabilitation centre

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday attended a fundraising dinner, organized by the Jordanian Psychiatric Rehabilitation Society, at Al Hussein Sports City to finance the establishment of a psychiatric and drug dependence rehabilitation centre in Na'our, according to a press release Wednesday.

The centre will offer therapy and rehabilitation programmes and vocational training as well as research, counselling, and education for patients, their families, and the general public. The centre's programmes will also

include "peer support," which will enable recovering patients to help others suffering from addictions, as well as "open employment" to increase employment opportunities for rehabilitated patients, the statement continued.

Psychiatric services in Jordan are provided by four sectors: the government (through the National Centre for Mental Health, Al Karama Hospital, the Forensic Hospital, and outpatient clinics), the army, the private sector (one 200-bed psychiatric hospital and 20 clinics), and the Jordanian Psychiatric Rehabilitation Society (JPRS).

according to the statement.

JPRS, which was established in 1989, is a non-governmental organisation affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development. It is the only organisation that enables individuals suffering from psychiatric disorders or drug-dependence problems to return and function as productive members of their community, the announcement read.

Queen Noor was received by JPRS President Haifa Bashir, members of the JPRS executive committee, and the deputy of the Minister of Social Development Tawfiq Kreishan.



President of the Upper House of Parliament Zeid Rifai Wednesday meets with Iranian ambassador Mohammad Ali Subhani (Petra photo)

Prime minister, foreign officials congratulate Parliament speakers

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday congratulated Senator Zeid Rifai on his reappointment as President of the Upper House of Parliament.

During a visit to Parliament, Dr. Majali and Mr. Rifai discussed the importance of further strengthening cooperation and coordination between the executive and legislative branches of government. Mr. Rifai voiced hope that relations

between the Upper House and government will be at their best in various fields.

Also Wednesday, Dr. Majali congratulated Deputy Sa'd Hayel Sour on his election as Speaker of the Lower House for the fourth consecutive term. Dr. Majali and Mr. Sour reviewed the general situation and underlined the need to enhance cooperation between the two branches of government.

Mr. Rifai also received

congratulations from Iraqi Ambassador to Jordan Nouri Wais, Iranian ambassador Mohammad Ali Subhani, Syrian chargé d'affaires Wahib Jabr, and Speaker of the Palestinian National Council Adib Zaidoun, who all called at Mr. Rifai's office.

The four envoys discussed means of enhancing cooperation between Jordan and their respective countries for the best interest of their peoples.

Lower House rejects case contesting validity of deputies' membership

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A case filed by one man contesting the validity of the membership of all 80 deputies in the 13th Parliament dominated discussion in yesterday's Lower House session.

The House rejected the case on the basis that the man had no right to contest the validity of all the deputies' elections. According to the House's internal regulations, any challenge of the validity of any member of the Lower House must specify the name of the deputy in question.

There were also nine other claims contesting the validity

of deputies' elections in five districts, including Amman's Third, Amman's Fifth, Balqa, Ma'an, and Zarqa.

The deputies, after some discussion, formed five committees to investigate these claims, one committee per district. According to regulations, each committee included five neutral deputies and, in an attempt to achieve fairness, one deputy with experience in law in four of the five committees.

Also on the agenda was the formation of the House's 14 permanent committees: the judiciary; economic and finance; Arab and international affairs (foreign affairs); administrative; edu-

cation, culture, and youth; Palestine; health and environment; water and agriculture; social development and work; energy and mineral resources; public services, tourism and antiquities; public freedom and citizen's rights; national guidance; and the badia and rural committee.

To save time, the House decided to form the committees in a meeting between the parliamentary blocs during an hour-long recess. However, when the House started reviewing the names, they disagreed on the formation of the Arab and international affairs committee.

After some discussion and

withdrawals, the House elected the committee's 11 members. Those elected to this committee were Amjad Majali (Karak), Nayef Mula (Amman Third), Hazem Momani (Ajloun), Mohammad Bataineh (Irbid), Fawzi Tuameh (Balqa), Mohammad Abu Hdeib (Amman Fifth), Mohammad Badri (Aqaba), Abdullah Jazi (Southern Badia), Khalil Haddadin (Amman Third), Mohammad Oran (Tafleh), and Daifallah Kaaber (Northern Badia).

The formation of the Palestine committee was another highly-contested issue. Mansour Murad (Zarqa) and Hamadeh

Fara'neh (Amman First) were not on the preliminary ten-member list, and insisted that they be added to the committee, saying their membership in that committee was of "primary interest." Ahmad Anab (Ajloun) stepped down in favour of Mr. Fara'neh.

The rest of the members are Mohammad Thweib (Amman Second), Rashid Baraiseh (Amman First), Ghaleb Zou'bi (Balqa), Abdullah Zaiqat (Karak), Asaf Asaf (Amman Fifth), Abdul Majeed Aqash (Amman Second), Bassam Haddadin (Zarqa), Mohammad Kouz (Amman Second), and Lutfi Barghouti (Amman Third).

UNRWA donor conference raises \$126 million

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) received more than \$126 million in pledges during the annual Pledging Conference held in New York Tuesday, according to an UNRWA statement issued Wednesday.

The pledges will go towards the \$343 million that the agency requires for its 1998 general fund budget, the statement said.

The U.S. announced the largest pledge of \$70 million, followed by Sweden with \$19 million, and Norway with \$14.2 million, the statement read.

The pledging conference was opened and chaired by U.N. General Assembly President Hennadly Udovenko, who is the foreign minister of Ukraine. UNRWA Commissioner General Peter Hansen made opening and closing remarks.

In his opening statement, Mr. Udovenko said: "UNRWA's accomplish-

ments over the years have been a tangible recognition of the international community's continuing responsibility to the Palestine refugees."

"Today," he said, "that continuing commitment is in serious jeopardy, due to the failure of the international community to provide UNRWA with the resources it needs to carry out its programmes and deliver relevant services."

In his statement, Mr. Hansen said he had alerted the international community, in particular UNRWA's traditional donors, that if the agency receives the same amount of funding for its 1998 general fund as in 1997, it would still face a deficit of some \$50 million, due to reductions and austerity measures imposed as a result of recurring financial crises in recent years.

Noting that UNRWA had prepared a "needs-based" budget linking programme

outputs to required funding, Mr. Hansen said: "For decades, the international community has financed services to the refugees at a certain level. It is important to maintain those levels so that the Palestinian refugee communities which have maintained their identity, and have, despite the odds, educated their children and instilled in them a sense of survival and enterprise, are enabled to continue doing so until there is a solution to their problem."

Mr. Hansen said the international community had already witnessed earlier this year the consequences of inadequate funding of UNRWA's budget, when the announcement of cuts provoked protests in the region. "If UNRWA is forced into a repetition of the events of 1997," he warned, "the reaction this time could be much more serious." He added that "it is imperative that UNRWA

begin to roll back the austerity measures introduced over the preceding years."

Mr. Hansen thanked those countries that made pledges for 1998, all of whom had spoken well of UNRWA's work and the efforts by the agency's staff on behalf of the refugees.

The representative of the Permanent Observer of Palestine also made a statement paying tribute to UNRWA's staff and acknowledging the importance of the agency's services in the lives of the refugees.

Other donors at the conference included the Netherlands and Switzerland, each making pledges equivalent to about \$5.5 million, while Germany announced some \$5 million, the UNRWA statement said.

Spain announced a contribution of approximately \$3.35 million, of which \$700,000 was specified as an additional contribution

to UNRWA for 1997, while the remainder was allocated to 1998, according to the statement.

Kuwait pledged \$1.5 million, as in previous years. Belgium contributed about \$659,000 for the 1998 regular budget and a further \$540,000 from the European Gaza Hospital, which was built by UNRWA with special contributions for the European Union and other donors.

Other countries pledging on Tuesday were Austria, Turkey, Luxembourg, China, Indonesia, Portugal, Malaysia, the Czech Republic, Tunisia, Cyprus, Egypt, India, Chile, and Malta.

Several of the agency's usual major donors said they were unable to make pledges at this time due to incomplete governmental or parliamentary procedures in their countries. These include Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, and the U.K.

Medical congress opens today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian-French Medical Association, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, will hold the Fifth Jordanian-French Medical Congress on Dec. 4-5, under the Patronage of HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid.

The theme selected for this year is "Primary Health Care: Present and Future." The choice of the subject originates from the importance of primary health care worldwide, extended concepts on the prevention of common chronic diseases like hypertension, diabetes, and osteoporosis, family planning, child's health, accidents, child abuse, and the views for the coming century, according to a press release Wednesday.

The conference will also address different issues related to health such as education, environment, and population.

Several scientists from France will be lecturing at this conference, including a consultant from the World Health Organisation (WHO), the president of Doctors of the World (a French NGO), the president of Jordanian-French Friendship in the French parliament, and the president of the French-Jordanian Medical Association in France, the statement said.

The Jordanian-French Medical Association began its activities in 1991 on the initiative of physicians who graduated from France or were francophones. Prince Ra'd is the honorary president of the association, which aims at developing communication and mutual support between doctors and health teams in Jordan and France.

A sister association, the French-Jordanian Medical Association is registered in France. Jacques Milliez, an eminent medical doctor, is the president of this association, the statement concluded.

Meeting opens to examine conditions of Palestinian refugees in Jordan

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A meeting focusing on the conditions of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan convened Wednesday in Aqaba.

This meeting is part of the multilateral refugee-working group and will focus on a study conducted by the Norwegian non-governmental organisation Fafo in cooperation with the Department of Statistics in Jordan.

The multilateral on refugees is the only one of the five that has not been stagnated by the stalemate in the peace process, according to Marwan Dudin, head of the Jordanian team in the refugee multilaterals. He added that plenaries where in-depth and sensitive debates take place have been long overdue.

"We should have held a plenary two years ago, but because of the political situation, we were involved with meetings dealing with data

and information on refugees in Palestine and the diaspora," he told the Jordan Times.

At the beginning of the Madrid process, the multilaterals were conceived of as complementing the bilateral negotiating tracks. Mr. Dudin noted the importance of plenaries to the refugee-working group since they deal with both political and statistical issues.

Discussions today will concentrate on the conditions of the Palestinian community in Jordan with particular emphasis on standards of living and social dimensions.

The Jordanian delegation to these talks includes three members who were involved in the formulation of the Fafo report.

Mr. Dudin said he hoped that this report will establish facts accepted by Russia and the U.S. (the sponsors), and the Canadians (the gavel holders), Palestinians, Egyptians, Israelis, and Jordanians.

"If this report is accepted as an international piece of research by the group, this means that we can move on in the multilaterals," Mr. Dudin stated.

Mr. Dudin remarked that during the last intersessional meeting on family reunification six months ago in Paris, the atmosphere was so tense that "some believed that the meeting would fall apart."

However, Mr. Dudin said he remained optimistic since Palestinians and Israelis are meeting during the present deadlock in the peace process.

"This is a step forward in itself, and by approving this piece of research, we would be giving these multilaterals a boost," he commented.

Jordan's standing position on Palestinian refugees is in line with U.N. resolutions pertaining to refugees and the Geneva Convention, which stress the basic right of every person to return to his or her homeland.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

* Annual YWCA Christmas classical choir at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. (until Saturday).

FILMS

* "Las Bicicletas son para el Verano" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.
* "Friedrich" — German Romantic Painter (in English with commentary in Arabic

by Dr. Mazen Asfour at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Plastic (abstract) art by Mohammad Qaddumi at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Dec. 7.
* Works by Ghada Dahdaleh at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 10.
* Paintings by Ammar Khamash at the French Cul-

tural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 12.

* Paintings by Saadi Al-Kaabi at Orient Gallery (Tel. 681303/4), until Dec. 4.

* An exhibition of prints by Algerian artist Koraisi, and calligraphy by Iraqi artist Massoudi, inspired by the poems of Mahmoud Darwish, at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31. Also displaying paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz, and works by contemporary Arab artists.

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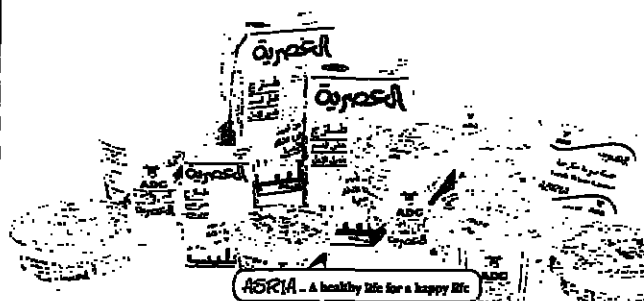
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homemade advantage... Healthy, tasty and

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U.S. chills hopes of progress at global warming talks

KYOTO, Japan (AFP) — The United States dampened hopes for progress in deadlocked U.N. talks aimed at limiting the emission of gases blamed for global warming.

European negotiators and leading officials of the landmark 10-day conference in Japan had raised expectations of a deal on how many greenhouse gases should be covered.

But even this hurdle, easier to leap than many others confronting the 147 nations gathered in the ancient Japanese capital of Kyoto, could not be cleared, according to Washington's main negotiator.

Europe added further to the gloom, predicting that a stand-off over U.S. demands that developing countries agree to new commitments would linger until the last moment of the Kyoto talks.

And no progress was reported on one of the toughest questions of how far to go in imposing legally-binding cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

The leading European Union (EU) official, Pierre Gramegna, and key

conference official Raul Estrada had said positions were getting closer on a proposal that just three gases should be covered by the proposed limits.

The compromise would have left a further three gases for another conference late next year, widely expected to be in Buenos Aires.

But leading U.S. negotiator Melinda Kimble squashed expectations that Washington might drop its insistence that all six greenhouse gases be included.

"The United States and a number of other countries made very clear that we believed the most environmentally-perfect basket is one that includes all six greenhouse gases," she told a news conference.

Mr. Gramegna, a Luxembourg diplomat, told another news conference that progress between developing countries and the United States was far from sight.

"We have taken contacts with the developing countries and have listened carefully to their positions and we think that it will be a very difficult issue that will drag on to the last day of this conference," he said.

The United States is the key player due to its political might and rank as the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, accounting for almost a quarter of the global total.

President Bill Clinton said Monday that Washington would oppose any accord that offered "something politically palatable, but that won't produce a result."

Developing countries must be included in a treaty reducing emissions, Mr. Clinton said.

According to U.N. estimates, current emission trends are likely to cause average global temperatures to rise 1.0 to 3.5 degrees Celsius over the next 100 years.

It is feared this could lead to a partial melting of the polar ice caps, raising and causing other catastrophic climate changes.

Tuila Slade of Samoa, spokesman for small island states threatened by rising sea levels, bemoaned the lack of progress by developed countries, saying one might well have to witness further effects of climate change before developed countries act.

Each offer, however, has a different underlying basis. The United States, for example, includes six greenhouse gases in its proposal while Europe and Japan include only three.

Ministers who will take the final decision will gather in Kyoto from this weekend.

Yeltsin announces reduction of Russian forces in Baltic bid

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin Wednesday announced plans to unilaterally reduce ground and naval forces in northwest Russia by more than 40 per cent on Jan. 1, 1999.

The reduction, announced in a speech to the Swedish parliament during a three-day state visit, is part of an initiative offered by Moscow to the Baltic states in October to ensure their security and dissuade them from seeking membership in NATO.

Mr. Yeltsin said he sought a "border of peace and not discord" with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which were occupied by the Soviet Union from 1940 to 1991.

In Brussels, Russia's Defence Minister Igor Sergeev said Moscow was announcing the troop cuts because security conditions in northern Europe are stable.

He said plans for a major downsizing of the Russian military were already in "practical shape."

"There will be considerable reductions in the Kaliningrad special area, in the Leningrad (Saint

Petersburg) military district, in the northern fleet as well as the Baltic fleet," Mr. Sergeev said.

Russia's two main military regions are Kaliningrad and Saint Petersburg.

The number of forces in the Kaliningrad enclave is estimated at 47,000. Russia had announced in July it wants to reduce troops there to 11-12,000 men.

The ex-Red Army is under a financial crunch and currently undergoing massive restructuring. Force numbers are expected to be reduced from some 1.7 million troops today to 1.2 million by the end of 1998.

In his speech Wednesday, Yeltsin proposed a series of "confidence-building measures" in the border zones and waters of the Baltic region.

Saying that "Russia is open to all proposals", Mr. Yeltsin proposed joint visits to military bases, joint surveillance of the air space over the Baltic and joint aviation exercises, and the establishment of a hotline between the military commands in Kaliningrad and the Baltic countries.

Russia has warned that if the Baltic states join NATO, Moscow will reconsider the historic cooperation pact it signed in May with the Atlantic Alliance.

The Baltic states have so far rejected the security pact offered by Russia. Yeltsin stressed that he was "certain that the Baltic region will absolutely become a region of solid confidence, stability and security," and noted the substantial influence of Sweden, which is militarily non-aligned, in the region.

Moscow has expressed hope that the Scandinavian country would help "normalise" Russian relations with the Baltics.

Mr. Yeltsin underlined that an EU-Russian agreement on cooperation and partnership, which came into force two days ago, "fully contributes to the construction of a big Europe."

"It opens the road to the formation of a pan-European area. But I'm convinced that the building of a big Europe will be solid only if all of its floors are solid, and that includes ours, the Baltic one," he said.

"We do not want our joint borders to separate us, but to bring us closer together," the Russian leader stressed.

Following Mr. Yeltsin's speech to parliament, he was expected to attend a lunch at the posh Grand Hotel in his honour, hosted by Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson and with King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia.

Yeltsin's visit is also intended to boost trade. He is accompanied by a 200-man delegation, including top ministers and industry leaders.

According to the Swedish financial daily Dagens Industri Wednesday, the automobile makers Volvo will sign a big contract with Russia for the delivery of buses to Saint Petersburg and the western Siberian city of Omsk, and for the construction of a factory to manufacture public transport vehicles in Russia.

The latest count was that 121 nations would sign the treaty this week banning the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel landmines.

The signing must be followed by ratification by at least 40 of the nations involved.

They included most of sub-Saharan Africa, including mine-ravaged Mozambique and Angola, almost all of Latin

American, most of Europe, including Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia, and Cambodia, thoroughly laced with mines.

This was tempered by major holdouts — the United States, Russia, China and most Middle Eastern nations as well as Afghanistan and Vietnam.

But the United States and Russia had taken their own measures to restrict mine export and use. U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan told a news conference that he believed public opinion would eventually force them to join.

"I don't think any government can sit out for long. It's only a question of time," he said after meeting Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.

Mr. Axworthy told the mine talks: "We still have to work to make the convention truly universal."

It will come into force once 40 nations have ratified it. Mr. Axworthy called for that goal to be met within a year.

Canada's single-minded drive in the past year to push the treaty was helped by the attention paid to Princess Diana at her death in a Paris car crash. She had campaigned for mine victims, standing with them in places like Mozambique.

"Ensuring that victims can lead meaningful, productive lives within their communities, in spite of their suffering and loss — this was the human aspect of the landmines crisis that the late Princess Diana brought to the attention of the world,"

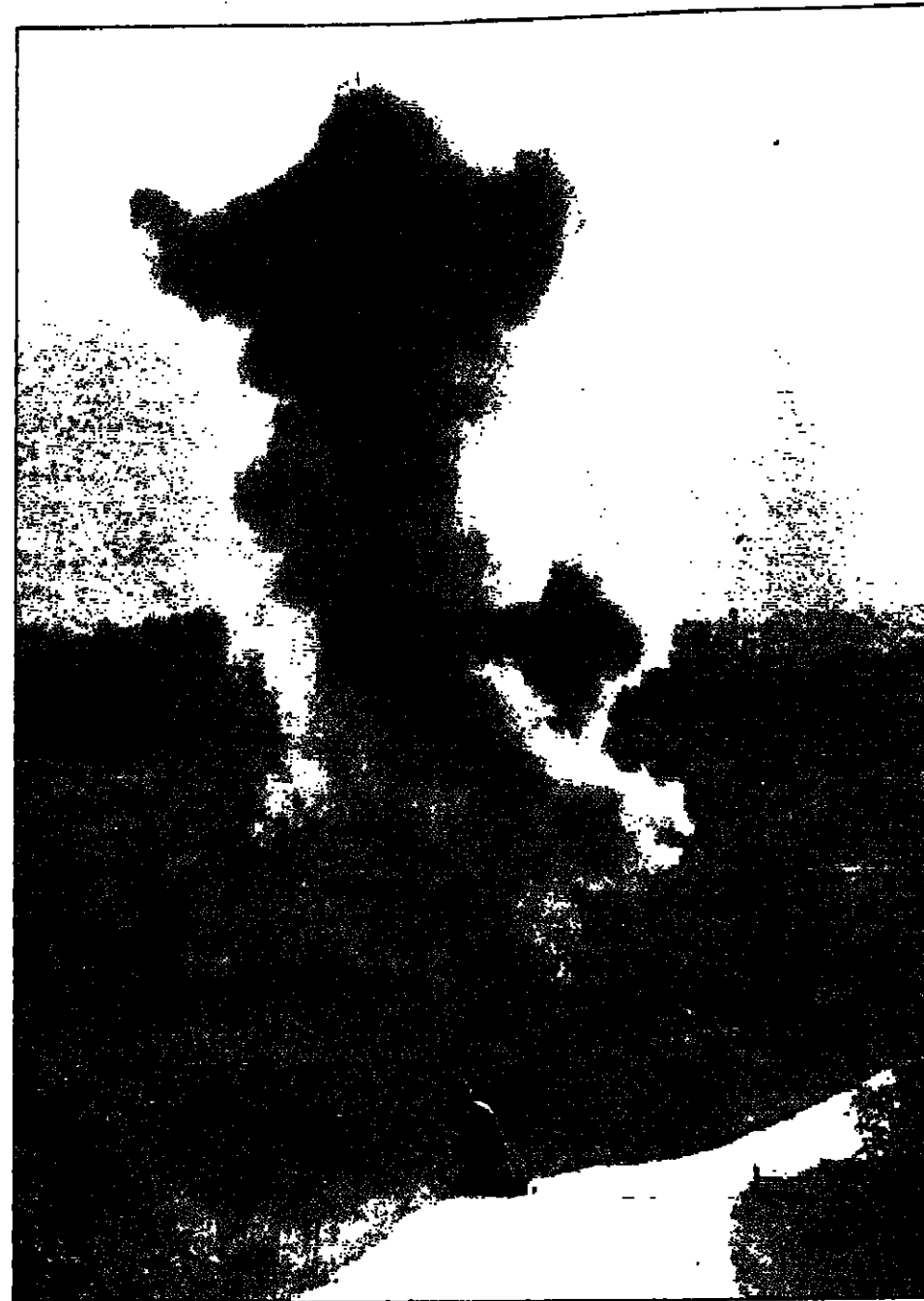
he said. Investigators suspect Kanetga and Yaguchi had violated a security law on the employment of ship crew by working as an unauthorised crew employment agency.

Kyodo News said police sources also suspect the arrests were the first in a case linked to the Russian mafia.

Police suspect the Russian fishing company, which is based in Cyprus, may be part of the Russian mafia's operations, the news agency said.

The agriculture, forestry and fisheries ministry has barred Japanese fishermen from fishing salmon in the northern Pacific aboard non-Japanese vessels.

Wednesday's arrests followed raids by police and the maritime safety agency in July on K.S. Co. and its affiliate.



A British soldier mine expert explodes a mine in a field near Stolac, eastern Bosnia in this October 1997 file photo. Over 100 countries will sign a treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines at a landmine conference being held in Ottawa Dec. 3 and 4 (Reuters photo)

Dream of landmine ban becoming reality in Ottawa

OTTAWA (R) — Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, invoking the memory of Princess Diana and countless victims of landmines, opened a conference Tuesday calling for quick approval of a treaty banning the weapons.

Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams led a standing ovation to salute the efforts of Mr. Axworthy, who surprised a landmine meeting in Ottawa 14 months ago by challenging delegates to return before the end of 1997 to sign a ban.

He confessed to having been unsure of the results when he threw down the challenge in the same hall in October 1996.

"But I thought that it was a risk worth taking," Mr. Axworthy told dignitaries from about 150 nations, along with activists and landmine victims, many of them in wheelchairs.

"I thought there was a real desire and a real possibility that a treaty could be negotiated, but frankly I did not dare hope for such an overwhelming response."

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The campaign was given a boost last year by a declaration by retired U.S. generals — including Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the allied forces that drove Iraq out of Kuwait — that the mines were not militarily necessary.

One of the main focuses of the three-day Ottawa conference will be to devote more resources to clearing the 60 to 100 million mines still littering fields and to help rehabilitate the victims.

Every week mines strike another 500 victims. That's one every 22 minutes, usually women or children.

"Landmines are World War III," a Cambodian victim, Tun Chan Nareth, told Reuters as he sat, both legs amputated at the knees, in a wheelchair he made.

"World War III continues to kill people step by step, day by day."

Mr. Tun stepped on a Chinese-made mine laid by the Khmer Rouge when he was on patrol in 1982 at the age of 22.

Next week he will travel to Oslo to receive, along with Jody Williams, the Nobel Peace Prize for the international campaign to ban landmines.

Ms. Williams told Reuters afterward that U.S. President Bill Clinton, who has argued that the United States still needed to reserve the right to use mines in between North and South Korea, was throwing away a chance at a place in history.

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Taleban declare support for global ban on landmines

KABUL (AFP) — Afghanistan's Taleban movement Wednesday declared its full support to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and called on the world community to sign the global treaty.

Abdul Sattar Pakis, a foreign ministry protocol chief also complained that United Nations funding for demining activities was inadequate for the country, where at least 20 people are injured by mines every day.

"In line with its Islamic policy, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taleban) is seriously against production, stockpiling and export of landmines," Mr. Pakis asserted.

"We call upon the whole world to sign this treaty to which we also declare our adherence," he said.

The statement came on the eve of a global conference in the Canadian capital Ottawa where 120 countries are expected to sign the landmark treaty to ban the use, production and sale of landmines.

The Taleban official noted that Afghanistan, where up to 10 million landmines are still believed to be hidden to take more lives, deserves more aid for its battle against the menace.

At least 30 landmine victims gathered for the announcement, delivered close to a mined former Soviet base in the shattered capital.

The victims included children and elderly males who had lost limbs while collecting firewood and metal scrap in the base, where in the last 15 days deminers have unearthed 207 anti-personnel landmines.

A demining official said there are 400,000 mine victims in Afghanistan which is locked in fighting due to the 1979 Soviet invasion and also factional power rivalries after the Red Army pull out in 1989.

However, in recent months the U.N. have faced a massive funding crisis for their mine clearance operations, forcing many deminers to work without pay since September.

According to U.N. mine clearance sources, all factions involved in the ongoing civil war, including the Taleban, continue to use mines and booby trapped ordnance as a valuable defensive tool.

Although forbidden to use mines, some individual Taleban units are reported to still use mines on a small scale, while opposition forces have received large quantities of the devices from Iran, a U.N. source said.

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World
Faulty
Estonia
disaster

BALLIN (AFP) — We
along devices on the bo
overlooked the 1994 Eston
any ferry disaster in which 8
people drowned, the offic
apart from the catastrophe se

Belarus:
The much-awaited 228-pa
spent refused to lay blame f
the accident but identified
one of technical failures an
design flaws which it said le
Europe's worst post-w
maritime disaster.

"The main causes of the
accident were weak locking
devices of the bow visor," sa
the report. "They should hav
been at least five tim
stronger."

The Estonia went down
on Sept. 27, 1994
after its bow doors we
opened off in heavy sea
between Tallinn and Stock
holm. Only 137 of its 989 pas
sengers and crew survived.

Wednesday's findings, put
together here in the Estonian
capital by an international
commission, confirmed a pro
visionary report which said
weak locks caused the oute
r bow door to come off, allow
ing water to gush in through
the car ramp — which whe
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quickly destabilising the ship.

The inquiry said its "funda
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which "it has not been the
commission's task to blame
anyone or to apportion liability

Nevertheless, in its report
the commission identified
design faults on the German
ship ferry, saying the position
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Faulty door led to Estonia ferry disaster — report

TALLINN (AFP) — Weak locking devices on the bow doors caused the 1994 Estonia car ferry disaster in which 852 people drowned, the official report into the catastrophe said Wednesday.

The much-awaited 228-page report refused to lay blame for the accident but identified a series of technical failures and design flaws which it said led to Europe's worst post-war maritime disaster.

"The main causes of the accident were weak locking devices of the bow visor," said the report. "They should have been at least five times stronger."

The Estonia went down overnight on Sept. 27, 1994 after its bow doors were ripped off in heavy seas between Tallinn and Stockholm. Only 137 of its 989 passengers and crew survived.

Wednesday's findings, published here in the Estonian capital by an international commission, confirmed a preliminary report which said weak locks caused the outer bow door to come off, allowing water to gush in through the car ramp — which when upright served as an interior door — and fill the car deck, rapidly destabilising the ship.

The inquiry said its "fundamental purpose" had been to improve maritime safety, adding "it has not been the commission's task to blame anyone or to apportion liability."

Nevertheless, in its report the commission identified design faults on the German-built ferry, built by Meyer Werft in 1979 and operated by the Swedish-Estonian ferry company Estline, the preliminary report had noted the vessel had been constructed to standards in force at the time.

Meyer Werft has argued the ship sank as a result of bad maintenance and not faulty construction.

The longitudinal position of the bow ramp was not compliant with the Solas (International Convention for the Safety of Lives at Sea) requirements for an upper

extension of the collision bulkhead.

"The ramp... was located too far forward," the commission of inquiry concluded. The Stockholm daily Dagens Nyheter reported Sunday that the Estonia's bulkhead was much nearer the bow than the 9.25 metres stipulated in the Solas-60 convention.

In its report, the commission said the Estonia was seaworthy and properly staffed at the time of the disaster, the cargo had been correctly secured and the bow visor door "was properly closed and secured at departure."

However, "the locking devices and the hinges of the visor failed due to one or two wave impact loads on the visor. The visor worked its way forward and forced the ramp open, due to the mechanical interference between the visor and the ramp," the commission said.

"The visor fell into the sea leaving the ramp fully open," allowing seawater to pour onto the car deck and cause a 15 degree list within minutes.

As the angle of the list increased, water began flooding into the accommodation decks, the report said, with the icy sea water gushing through the ship's windows.

The commission also dismissed suggestions that the ship should never have put to sea in such poor weather, saying that although rough weather conditions were not extreme.

While criticising the design of the ferry, built by Meyer Werft in 1979 and operated by the Swedish-Estonian ferry company Estline, the preliminary report had noted the vessel had been constructed to standards in force at the time.

Meyer Werft has argued the ship sank as a result of bad maintenance and not faulty construction.



Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, (second right) her daughter Zenane Dlamini (second left) and legal advisors Ishmael Semenya (left) and Moses Mavundla (right) converse during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing Dec. 3 1997 (Reuters photo)

Witness briefly stalls Winnie inquiry

JOHANNESBURG (R) —

A key witness in the South African Truth Commission inquiry into Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and her football club entourage halted proceedings Wednesday with a demand to see his eldest child before testifying.

Madikizela-Mandela, former wife of South Africa's President Nelson Mandela, was expected to take the stand later in the day to answer allegations of kidnapping, torture, assault and murder.

But her testimony is scheduled to follow that of former Mandela United Football Club Coach Jerry Richardson, who is serving a life prison sentence for the murder of teenage activist Stompie Seipei after he was kidnapped by Madikizela-Mandela in 1988.

Mr. Richardson has applied for amnesty under the country's National Unity and Reconciliation Act for 14-year-old Seipei's murder and several others associated with the football club's reign of terror in late 1980s Soweto.

He is expected to name Madikizela-Mandela as a co-conspirator in several of the killings he claims to have

committed.

Dressed in a deep green suit with a red handkerchief in his pocket and clutching a miniature red-and-white soccer ball, Mr. Richardson took the stand and immediately demanded to see his eldest daughter, Lena Richardson, before he would testify.

"No, I will not be free to continue without seeing members of my family. I say I want to see my firstborn... if I could just see Lena Richardson then I will shock you," he told the commission.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, chairman of the commission appointed to heal the wounds of apartheid, responded: "I am not a God. If Lena is not here, there is nothing I can do."

The hearing got under way after a brief adjournment as Mr. Richardson began to explain how he came to be head of Madikizela-Mandela's entourage.

Madikizela-Mandela, 63, is seeking election later this month as deputy president of the African National Congress (ANC), which she and Mr. Mandela have served since before their 1958 marriage.

Pakistani prime minister seeks to heal divisions after showdown

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — An acting president and an interim Supreme Court chief took over in Pakistan Wednesday following Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's victory in a bruising constitutional battle.

Senate Chairman Wasim Sajjad stepped in as acting president following Farooq Ahmed Leghari's dramatic resignation as head of state late Tuesday, accusing Mr. Sharif of seeking "total powers."

Under the constitution Mr. Wasim can take the office for 30 days until a new president is elected.

The Supreme Court moved to restructure its divided ranks by appointing justice Ajmal Mian as interim chief justice in place of Sajjad Ali Shah whose row with Mr. Sharif caused the crisis.

Mr. Sharif said "I have no anger or hatred against anyone," in a national assembly speech after Mr. Leghari resigned.

He said he would now concentrate on putting right damage caused to the economy caused by the three month old crisis. Huge orders export were cancelled or put on hold because of fears of instabil-

ity. He also promised to end lawlessness, terrorism and unemployment.

The president resigned after the powerful army reportedly refused to back any move to disband the national assembly or the government.

Analysts said Mr. Sharif, whose Pakistan Muslim League (PML) commands a two-thirds majority in parliament, drew strength from the fact that throughout the crisis support from MPs had remained intact.

The parliamentary opposition offered no alternative and the country could ill-afford new elections, they said.

Mr. Leghari, elected for five-year term in 1993, said he stepped down as attempts were made to "conquer and subjugate" the judiciary in a bid to muster "total powers."

He accused the government of starting a "confrontation" with the judiciary and sowing seeds of "subversion" in the supreme court.

The tussle exploded into a split and top judges were divided into rival camps.

Mr. Sharif and his aides

accused the president of conspiring against the government in a much-publicised contempt of court case against the prime minister.

Mr. Leghari sided with the chief justice and refused to sign a law that would enable Mr. Sharif to challenge any guilty verdict pronounced in the contempt case.

The case had assumed added importance as Mr. Sharif's conviction would have cost him his job as prime minister.

In the hours leading up to Mr. Leghari's resignation, a 10-member bench suspended the chief justice, endorsing an earlier three-judge verdict that he had unlawfully superseded four judges senior to him in 1994.

The last order passed by Mr. Shah was restoration of the president's powers to dissolve parliament.

Mr. Shah, who is to retire in February, remains a judge and he has said he will not resign. But he did not attend court and as he appears to have lost his battle, many believe he might go on leave before retirement.

Mr. Shah insisted the

division in the judiciary was engineered by the government to scuttle the contempt case.

The case against Mr. Sharif remains active and analysts are now waiting to see how it is handled by the restructured judiciary.

Pakistani businessmen meanwhile welcomed Mr. Leghari's resignation but the main opposition party called on Mr. Sharif to quit.

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of former premier Benazir Bhutto said the crisis was created by Mr. Sharif to save himself from the court action.

The changes in the "two top" constitutional offices of president and chief justice were the result of Sharif's efforts to "save" himself. Aitzaz Ahsan, leader of the opposition in the Senate, said.

Arif Habib, President of Karachi Stock Exchange (KSE), said the president's resignation would remove political uncertainty.

Dewan Shaban Salman Farooqui, president forum of industrialists and trader of Pakistan, said the crisis was created unnecessarily to destabilise the elected government and harm national economy.

'Hindu nationalists still trying to form government'

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Hindu nationalists are still in the race to set up a coalition government following the resignation by Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral, a prominent ally said Wednesday.

"Yes, a government led by the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party, Indian People's Party) is still feasible," said George Fernandes, who heads a party allied to the Hindu nationalists.

Fernandes said the BJP was

looking for a split in the 140-member Congress I party, its main rival, to cobble together a majority in the 545-seat Lok Sabha, the lower house of India's hung parliament.

No single party has the strength to form a government on its own.

"The arithmetic in parliament being what it is, the Congress has to break up for a coalition to take office," Fernandes told AFP.

"At least 47 Congress MPs should come out of the party

and agree to support the BJP. The BJP is trying for that. My hunch is that figure has not been reached so far."

"If a split takes place, the breakaway group will join hands with BJP and form a coalition government."

The BJP and its four allies command 193 seats in parliament. Among the three main power blocs — including Congress and the outgoing United Front coalition — they need the least amount of defectors, around 80, to com-

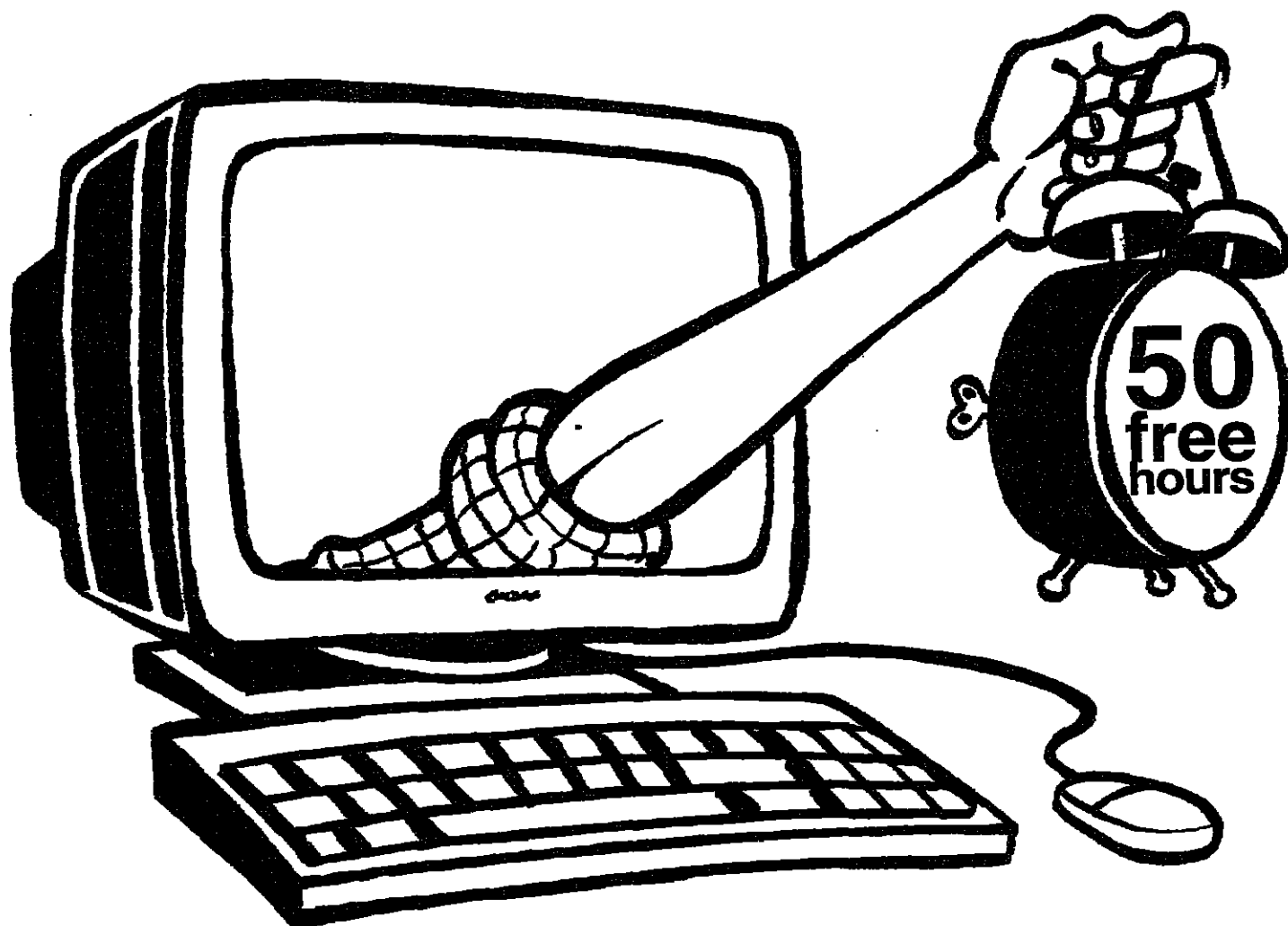
mand a parliament majority.

The Congress, which topped Gujral's minority government last week, has opened talks with his coalition for a possible patch-up. But coalition officials said Wednesday a renewed tie-up was unlikely.

Indian President K.R. Narayanan, who has urged Gujral to continue in office until further notice, has to decide if a new coalition can take power or if elections have to be organised.

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Super duties

IT IS a big disappointment that the U.S., the prime mover behind the new international order, has turned to be the only party that blocks a world ban on anti-personnel mines and a global effort to limit the greenhouse effect. At the ongoing Ottawa meeting, some 120 countries are expected to sign a declaration outlawing the production, possession and deployment of mines. Washington meanwhile, wants to stay out of the international consensus against these killers and maimers. The same U.S. attitude has also surfaced at the Kyoto gathering to combat the greenhouse effect. Amidst a growing international consensus on the urgent need to put the survival of Earth ahead of economic considerations, President Bill Clinton has obviously bent backwards to appease American industrialists who do not seem to mind the damage their factories are causing to the atmosphere. The international community expects from the U.S., as a major superpower, to set international standards that would guide the course of humanity on the next millennium. Despite repeated efforts to convince Washington to join the ban on mines, the Clinton administration resisted because of its military interests. It is hard to understand why and how the U.S. would need anti-personnel mines to defend itself or its allies. Surely whatever advantage the U.S. may gain from deploying such mines, it is more than outweighed by other considerations. The end result at this point in time is that the Ottawa ceremony would remain incomplete if the U.S. and other powers, such as China and maybe India, did not sign.

Washington has an international obligation that supersedes its domestic concerns. As a global power, the U.S. bears a great responsibility for the safety, health and welfare of peoples at large and an obligation to save our planet from environmental destruction. Washington is, therefore, called upon to reconsider its priorities as a global power and put first things first.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AI Ra'i's Sultan Hattab Wednesday said that with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new offer of very limited Israeli pullout from Palestinian lands, the premier aims to escape world pressure on him to implement the Oslo accords and at the same time deceive the international community into believing that he is for peace. Hattab said the world community realises that Netanyahu is a liar and the Palestinians continue to suffer as a result of his failure to respect the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords. Hattab said while announcing his offer to the Palestinians, Netanyahu also announced that a major Jewish settlement will be built east of Qalqilya on the occupied West Bank in March next year. Since Netanyahu is determined to kill the peace process, the Palestinians should not give in and accept his conditions neither should they accept any change in the Oslo accords which call for a complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territory, stressed the writer. He said the Palestinians should not give Netanyahu a chance to deceive the world community but should expose his lies and falsehoods and cling hard to their legitimate rights. He urged Arab countries to fully support the Palestinian leadership's stand.

AI Dastour's Mohammad Daoud said he feared the present government's continued borrowing of funds from other nations and institutions would only further burden the state treasury. What is disturbing, Daoud said, is that most of the borrowed money is channelled towards projects which are not urgent and in fact could be postponed. The government should avoid borrowing to keep from accumulating debts and should work to make the country self-reliant, the writer said. The government is expected to reduce general expenditure and restrict capital expenditure to income-generating projects and those that employ the greater numbers of people, he said. The writer said Jordan is still reeling under the consequences of the already heavy debts and is struggling to pay them back; and therefore should learn a lesson from past experience and avoid exposing the country to further set backs.

View from Academia

Higher education means innovation too

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubeh

INCREASINGLY, OUR conception of university class experience — especially at the undergraduate level — is changing. Not long ago, and at many Arab universities until now, the class situation (like the school class situation some time ago) was instructor-based. Halls were called — at many universities, they are called so until now — lecture halls. The assumption is that a professor comes, either with a bunch of papers in his/her hand or with thoughts fully formulated in his/her mind, to lecture at or dictate to students. The students sit and faithfully record what they hear.

Until now, there are a number of university professors (a minority no doubt, but a significant minority, I would say) who come to the lecture hall to lecture. When they talk about a literary author, a historical figure, a social issue, an economic matter, a political event, etc., they come with the intention of reciting to the students not only the basic facts (which students can easily find in the library) but also the analysis of the facts. In other words, such professors do everything on behalf of the students: they get the information from library resources, put them together in a coherent presentation, present them to the class, raise ques-

tions and answer them, analyse, think, agree and disagree (with themselves), argue (with themselves), debate (with themselves), and conclude, all while the students are watching. The majority of us reject this old-fashioned method. We have come to view the lecture-hall situation as a school-classroom situation. University students, like school students, are learners, first and foremost — partly because our schools, until now, have not succeeded in endowing the students with all the learning we wish to endow them with (most of the time, in other words, we find ourselves at the university doing what the teachers in the earlier stages of learning should have done; in this sense the university becomes an extension to the school), and partly because, due to the emergence of graduate studies, undergraduate students are no longer thought of as scholars or mini-scholars (graduate students are) but as learners still.

What this means is that professors have to come to understand better the way undergraduate university students learn and tailor their approaches to fit students' needs more radically than they do at present.

In light of this, we at the university level

need to make several crucial adjustments. Professors need to change their attitude and conception of how to approach students (i.e. that students are both learners and active participants), need to change their method of communication with the students (stop lecture-delivery), and need to increase students' reliance on library resources.

The very physical setting in the lecture halls themselves needs to be changed. Until now, in most of our classes seats are cemented to the floor: students cannot move, and professors can't move. Many professors sit at their table or desk the entire time.

The good news is that our universities are fully aware of the changes we need to make in order to make the university learning experience a more effective one. A minority of professors have already adopted the required attitudes and methods of communication. Nevertheless, we need to spread the message among the rest.

Class communication (not lecturing) ought to be a crucial priority for us, if we want to transform the university learning/teaching experience into what we wish it to be. Class restructuring is a must. We need to innovate.

M. KAHIL



Berlin called for partition of Israel

By John Ezard

THE LAST written words from the revered Jewish-born scholar, Sir Isaiah Berlin, called for the partition of Israel as being "the only correct solution" for the Middle East.

This deathbed appeal — more outspoken and categorical than anything he had said before — was revealed in London by his three literary trustees.

The philosopher, who died in Oxford last month aged 88, was a lifelong Zionist. He detested publicity, but friends knew he was deeply worried by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's stance. On November 5, before his last heart attack, he dictated the statement to his wife, and authorised its publication.

Sir Isaiah's statement said, "Since both sides begin with a claim of total possession of Palestine as their historical right,

and since neither claim can be accepted within the realms of realism or without grave injustice, it is plain that compromise — i.e. partition — is the only correct solution."

"Ideally, what we are calling for is a relationship of good neighbours, but, given the number of bigoted terrorist chauvinists on both sides, this is impracticable."

"The solution must lie somewhere along the lines of reluctant toleration, for fear of far worse — i.e. a savage war which could inflict irreparable damage on both sides."

"As for Jerusalem, it must remain the capital of Israel with the Muslim holy places being extra-territorial to a Muslim authority, and a smallish Arab quarter with guarantee from the U.N. of preserving that position — by force if necessary."

The Guardian

African democratisation poses dilemmas

By John Gay Yoh

REPEATED ATTEMPTS by Western scholars to disown the concept of "democracy" from African culture have confused several African politicians and decision makers, and indeed led some of them to believe that the concept of an open political system is a Western invention. In the West, democracy is associated with the idea of "nationhood," a sense of being a homogeneous society. For the last five centuries, Europeans were able to de-tribalise their tribes and thus form nation-states. That there are genuine moves to de-tribalise African societies, is a reality to be reckoned with. It is not that African societies like the idea of de-tribalisation, but the reality is that they just do not have a choice.

The trend of industrial-urban life requires that such a process has to take place. De-tribalisation means more urbanisation, hence the creation of a new semi-homogeneous pluralistic society, whereby, political participation is subject to new sets of non-tribal laws. I think this kind of process is taking place in several African societies these days. Whether this is a healthy socio-political change or not, it is left to history to judge. The essence of my argument is that some sort of change is happening in Africa, and denying or ignoring it would be a gross mistake.

True, many African leaders have long complained, with some justification, that the Western media give false impressions by only reporting on the "horsemanship of the African apocalypse": civil wars, corruption, coups, famines and epidemics. Despite some remarkable changes which are taking place, there seems to be nothing new happening out of Africa. Yet somewhere in between, the day-to-day changes in the continent are left out. This reality reaches its climax in urban slums and in scattered villages on the mountains or in the vast marshes of African forests. This reality is a brutal, elemental, joyful and of course fearful. Ironically, and indeed mistakenly, the picture in the Western media is drawn in such a way that the "Good Samaritan" or "Generous Benefactor" are the Western companies and the NGOs operating in the continent. Not-knowing, half-fearing or perhaps, unwilling to recognise the falsehood of their stand, the Western firms opt to deal with this "easy-going friendly countries" where "the good-guys and the bad-guys" are clearly defined.

Thus, they have to report what fits their interests. Unfortunately, in business terms they are morally right. This is one side of the coin. But one wonders whether democratisation works due to the credibility of reports from without the society or from within it?

The other side of the coin lies within African leadership. Most African leaders tend to belittle their role in democratising their societies to the point of complete dependence on what outsiders "think" is right and not what "actually" is the reality. For example, the concept of "consensual democracy" in African societies has always been an integral part of what is often referred to as "African collective participation behaviour," best known in the West as "popular democracy." Many Western scholars tried to dissuade African politicians to believe that the concept of majority rule cannot work in African societies, for it entails unanimity, and can only be practised in societies where people are assumed to be aware of their rights and obligations and capable of differentiating between private and public interests. Thus for these critics, "consensual democracy" cannot work in Africa.

It was then that these Western academics began to preach the idea of one-party system. Their argument was that, since African societies are tribally made-up, a one-party system will make it possible to avoid lengthy discussion and opens the barriers that were blocking "national" unity. But as it turned out later, the single-party doctrine, which is alien to African culture, became an obstacle to the national integration itself. For one, it teaches people to behave deceitfully, to conceal their true feelings, and indeed it became the promoter of tribalism, where individuals, alienated by life of dictatorial society, turn to tribe, ethnic origin or religion as a safe haven. I think it is not fashionable any longer to ask whether a one-party system is fit for African societies or not.

The conceptual dilemma seems to emanate from the idea that "democracy" or democracy, is linked to ancient Greece — later incorporated into European culture — and thus makes democracy an exclusive European property. Because of that, regrettably though, some Africans look uncomfortable at the authority of African democratisation, hence not admitting the fact that the pliable nature of democracy should draw their attention to the universality of democracy as a concept.

Yet it is beyond doubt that democracy is not a total universal model for a society, but only a political regime practiced by each society in accordance with its traditional heritage. Again, one should emphasise that democracy as a code of governance may fail in a given society, and may lead to economic crises, social violence and increased inequality. It has to be nursed within appropriate time scale. While freedom of expression or privacy is a prerequisite for healthy democratic set up, it is not enough in the absence of real choice for political participation. Hence the time factor counts more than anything else in the democratisation process.

Again, democracy is not just a racing field or a competitive political stock-market. It is the ability of each person in the society to act as a citizen — actually feel and act as such — to defend his/her ideas, rights and interests. It is true that where there is no political participation of the majority of citizens, there can never be democracy. Because, where political participation is weak, choices become limited to few. After all, democracy is based on mutual concern of forming a government capable of ensuring communal integration. It has to be representative, and it officials should know the society's priorities and should work for people or at least try to do so.

To put it differently, it is when cultural values in a given society and social conflicts are inter-related that it becomes possible to build up democratic institutions. Whenever you do away with common cultural orientation in the society, the end result is civil war. If on the other hand you take away social conflict, you will definitely get unity rather than division. I think the best way to convince the citizens to accept democratisation — meaning participatory system — is when they are convinced that democracy is the only workable political regime that allows or gives room for solid combination of defence of individual rights, personal interests and the concern for public interests. To maintain this conviction, education plays a big role in formation of "national" identity in a tribal society, and thus it becomes possible to create a new but distinct African political culture.

This new political culture should be based on the understanding that politics is nothing but about people. It is thus important to note that, people cannot work, think, grow,

invent or for that matter love in absence of inspired freedom of choice. It is when people are free that they are able to retrieve the experiences of their history and transcend the present and therefore become ready to project alternative futures. I think in every society, people need each other and thus they have to live among communities in order to help each other — in solidarity — to solve their problems. They have to share services and face difficulties as one body. It is thus noticed that several African societies prefer gradual change and slow transformation. Like other societies elsewhere, they have great respect for social norms, they reject anarchic authority, but they accept a limited regime of free choices.

As the majority of Africans found themselves alienated from the power centre, lack of initiative and responsibility became part of society problem. As usual, the knowledge of the source of the authority reminds the rulers about their responsibilities. Thus when people are alienated, the politics of open society becomes politics of anger, pride, frustration, prejudice and that of negative competition. Whenever the large segment of the society, lawyers, students, or farmers become less concerned with the major problems of African societies, the political life in these societies becomes more and more the work of a very small professional minority of politicians, experts, technicians, and bureaucrats. One should also add that it is often times when politicians no longer lead and people no longer actively support their cultural image, even in the so-called advanced democratic societies. People would no longer have interest in voting, and political life becomes monotonous. It is an open secret that the law of nature in every society stipulates that man has no lordship over man, neither has any generation dominion over generations which are to follow. It is by direct participation and activism of all members of the community — and not by what outsiders of their media say about that community — that fresh solutions can be provided for both the old and the new problems. Africans should learn to stop blaming others for their own made mistakes.

The writer is an associate researcher at the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in Amman. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

IT OCCURRED TO ME...

Unfortunate fortune-teller

By Ali Kassay

ONE DAY, about a year and a half ago, my car happened to be in the garage for one of those sporadic bouts of maintenance, at the end of which a mechanic invariably emerges with a handful of screws which, he assures me, are surplus to need. Therefore that morning found me at a spot frequented by taxis, trying desperately to attract the attention of one of the cab drivers who passed and who, as if by a prior unanimous decision, ignored me in their search for a lady client, preferably one dressed in a short skirt.

As I was so occupied I was approached by one of the hawkers that roam the streets trying to sell carpets which make you think wistfully of colour blindness. This, as I was to discover, is their second profession. A side activity, if you want. Their real income, as it turned out, is derived from fortune telling, which was the service that he offered me.

When I answered that the market for his skill was low enough to be the non-existent, he decided to impress me with his prowess and said: "When you were young, you fell very ill and came close to death, but God chose to save you, now thank God for his mercy." Well, the faithful should always thank God for his blessings, but the soothsayer's insight in my past could not have been further from the truth, since I have always enjoyed the best of health. An infrequent cold was about the size of it, and I told him so, but he persisted:

"Of course, it was your son who fell ill." He suggested, "I have no children." I informed him, "Of course, someone has cast a spell on you to stop you from procreating." He declared, "I have no children because I am not married yet." I explained, which was correct at the time, "Yes! Yes!" He exclaimed, having at last homed in on his target. "Someone has put a spell on you to prevent you from marrying. Now give me 20 dinars and I will reverse the spell." I could have explained that I was engaged to be married, but I was getting bored with him by then. "Go away, you shall not have a penny," I said. "OK, OK, I shall break the spell for 10 dinars." He offered, then he added, having noticed the lack of interest: "Well, five dinars, one dinar... Look, I have had no breakfast, please give me something."

I relate this story to you to explain how surprised I was the other evening when I learnt that these charlatans run a very lucrative business. The more specialised among them, apparently, have regular salons where they conduct their practice openly despite its illegality. It would appear that many people from our highly educated and God-fearing society seek such services avidly, and are happy to be separated from hundreds of dinars at a go, in return.

Funnily enough, one person who travelled to a distant village to seek the counsel of a reputable soothsayer could not find his address, so she sought and received directions from — wait for it, a policeman.

Catch th

By Jean-Claude

THE PC was launched in the equipment has been chosen to catch up with it. It is normally designed to complement the best of computer software to be well synchronised for the past 15 years, how much faster than hardware. The pace, but the main one is very slow. Admittedly, there is a level of cooperation is not what it used to be. Manufacturers like Intel and Microsoft, Core and others are increasingly demanding just can't keep up with the PC. The OS was launched in the PC to run at acceptable speed and was microprocessors (C and others) and improvement about the PC's became truly powerful (millions of characters) and the end of 1994 hardware had

Micro, small enterprises can contribute to development goals — Queen

Following is the full text of Her Majesty Queen Noor's working paper for The Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the International Labour Organisation's Regional Seminar on Micro and Small Enterprise Promotion for Women in the Arab Region which the Queen delivered on Tuesday.

WE ARE very grateful for the International Labour Organisation's extensive support of this important gathering of Arab officials and practitioners in micro credit and small enterprises. This seminar exemplifies the legacy of the United Nations' constructive contribution to Arab development. I would also like to thank the many Jordanians, who worked so tirelessly to bring you all together here today. We hope this meeting will foster deeper national and regional partnerships among interested organisations, in the service of sustained improvements in the quality of life of Arab women and their communities.

The last decade has shown that — alongside education — successful female-targeted micro credit and micro enterprises are the most effective way in the medium term to enhance the Arab woman's personal status and her contribution to national economic development. By bringing women into formal economies, micro enterprises help to release the Arab World's single greatest untapped indigenous source of economic innovation, production, and growth. This important realisation is now being translated into fact at the global, national and local levels.

Global fora such as the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Copenhagen Social Summit identified many constraints to women's increased contributions to worldwide economic growth, while proposing strategies to remedy the situation. The World Bank has already earmarked \$200 million for loans to poor women entrepreneurs, and at the recent Washington micro credit summit UNDP launched a \$41 million global Microstart programme. Many bilateral donors are following suit, such as USAID's allocation of \$120 million this year for worldwide micro enterprise development. The world's embracing of micro credit today as a feasible component of national development strategy is largely a result of the pioneering work started two decades ago by Professor Mohammad Yunus of Bangladesh; his loans to poor women have resulted in the largest micro credit bank in the world, the Grameen Bank, with repayment rates that are greater than those of commercial banks. The Grameen Bank experience verifies that micro credit is not only sound human development; it is also prudent and profitable banking.

At the national level, all the countries of this region are experiencing economic adjustment policies that shift responsibility for job creation from the public to the private sectors. Micro enterprises and small-to-medium-scale businesses are proven to be the most cost-efficient means of creating a substantial number of new jobs; the economic growth they trigger is also likely to be sustainable in the long term, because their centre of gravity is firmly anchored in the dynamism of private initiative. At the local and community level, and usually out of sheer necessity of increasing family incomes, more and more Arab women engage in entrepreneurial activity, generally without the benefits of training, credit, or technical know-how. Micro enterprises with a strong training component are extremely effective in increasing women's productivity and contributions to their local economies. Equally importantly, micro enterprises promote development with social stability, because the form of economic activity they spark is culturally acceptable, technologically realistic, environmentally prudent, and sensitive to preserving the traditional social cohesion and moral integrity of Arab society. UNDP

studies have also shown that when women control the cash income from such businesses, it is more likely to be spent on child survival and other human development issues.

Micro credits and small enterprises can contribute to simultaneously achieving all Arab economic and social development goals: They enhance the skills, capabilities and self-confidence of individual women, deepen women's participation in community life, make fuller use of available national talent, create jobs, generate wealth, combat poverty, strengthen the role of the private sector, relieve central government financial burdens, and promote gender equality in legal, labour, educational and other sectors.

By expanding women's access to public services and releasing their productive energy, micro enterprises are a key to breaking the cycle of poverty and dependence. By increasing women's participation in public life at the community level, micro credit and micro enterprises deepen the Arab experience in shura, ijma'a, democracy, and other forms of participatory and accountable decision-making. By simultaneously enhancing women's personal, political and economic status, they empower women to achieve economic autonomy and promote integrated and sustainable development.

Indeed, national development can only truly be called "sustainable" when it advances the political, social, economic and personal rights of men and women alike — thereby tapping their full human and material assets and deepening their sense of national identity and commitment. This is why we in Jordan have embraced micro credit as a critical component of our national social productivity programme as well as of community-based development efforts managed by NGOs. The latest surveys indicate that over 24 million dinars have been made available to some 7,000 borrowers, representing 56,000 family members, and the available funds for lending are expected to double in the next two years. Some NGOs have developed innovative credit programmes based on Islamic values, such as "murabaha" or in-kind borrowing.

The ongoing worldwide reassessment of development strategies will impact the life prospects of billions of people in the next century. Central to this question is the role of women at community level, particularly the linkages between women, poverty, the economy, the environment, and education. Female-managed micro enterprises are an effective antidote to the chronic cycle of poverty-ignorance-and-poor health that plagues many of the world's poor women. They are a unique point of convergence of human talent, personal rights, private enterprise, national development policies, and the consensus global ethic for human rights and well-being.

Your gathering here this week should expand the contribution of micro credit and micro enterprises to Arab development. This is a valuable opportunity to share experiences, to learn from one another, and to develop common national strategies that can benefit from economies of scale in the marketplace of ideas. Beyond the generic advantages I mentioned above, micro enterprises in the Arab World are especially important in view of the relatively low level of women's participation in economic or public life. The Arab women's participation rate in the formal economy is 25 per cent, compared to 39 per cent in the developing world; and Arab women's participation rate in political life is just 4 per cent, compared to 10 per cent in the developing world. This is in sharp contrast with the rapid pace of women's progress in most Arab countries in health and education. For example, or in increased family awareness of good health practices. Arab states have made the fastest progress in women's education in the last two

decades; female literacy has more than doubled since the early 1970s, and life expectancy has increased from 51 to 63.3 years.

While women in some Arab countries still require better access to education and health facilities, female entrepreneurs in all Arab countries require better access to training, credit, technical support, and market knowledge. A recent study conducted by Mu'tah University in Jordan reveals an enormous gap between demand and availability of credit for women: in the five years after 1991, demand for credit among women increased by over 340 per cent, but access to credit by women was far below demand — due to the absence of specialised credit institutions and the inability of women to provide guarantees demanded by traditional banks.

More and more Arab women, whether well educated or not, already use their skills as wage earners and self-employed entrepreneurs. Quite a few women benefit from efforts by governments, private companies or non-governmental organisations to increase women's productive participation in the economy. Some women have established their own professional associations to support other women entrepreneurs, and a few enterprising Arab business and professional women have emerged as role models. The legal base is already in place for a major leap forward in women's integration in Arab economic development.

Your challenge and opportunity at this seminar is to document clearly the successes achieved to date in this pioneering field, while identifying the constraints and weaknesses that need to be overcome. I urge you to delineate in detail the particular and complementary roles that can be best played by governments, NGOs, the private sector and international development agencies.

The state should ensure equal access to resources and infrastructural needs, provide an enabling legal environment, and include women in all poverty-eradication efforts. The private sector should offer women and micro enterprises equal access to jobs, training and credit. Non-governmental organisations should continue promoting women's roles as participants in the mainstream economy and in public decision-making. International agencies should continue to provide their valuable technical expertise, and promote means of sharing experiences and lessons. Together we can form a vital partnership for personal dignity, national development, and worldwide peace and stability.

From our own experience in Jordan and our interaction with colleagues from other countries, we are convinced of the central role to be played in this field by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). By promoting market-oriented and innovative productive ventures by women — such as handicrafts, apparel, food processing and furnishings — NGOs have helped women to develop their personal talents, increase their family incomes, meet local market demand, stimulate export demand, and contribute meaningfully to the public life of their communities. As micro credit and micro enterprises become more central to Arab community development efforts, we anticipate that national NGOs will play a correspondingly larger catalytic role, given their flexibility, innovation, dynamism and close contacts at the community level.

We look forward to your recommendations on how best to integrate women into the development process and public life and how to increase female employment, while maintaining the strength and integrity of the Arab family. We hope that you can provide policy recommendations for public and private sector institutions working in this field — perhaps even suggesting region-wide projects to continue the coordination and mutual learning that have been initiated here this week.

Society on the move

Mutawi honoured

The big news this week was that a Royal Decree has been issued to present Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi with the Kawkab Medal of the First Order. Dr. Mutawi obtained his bachelors degree in economics from the London School of Economics where he specialised in international relations, and his Ph.D. from Reading University. He had served as media advisor to His Majesty King Hussein, worked in the private sector, was once vice president for public relations of Royal Jordanian, and was employed in various media establishments including the BBC World Service Radio, Jordan Television, Radio Jordan, Radio Holland and Al Qabas daily in Kuwait. He has been decorated with Al Ishtiklal Medal, the Austrian Silver Cross and the Italian Commander. Dr. Mutawi, who became a first-time minister in the current cabinet, in being presented with the Kawkab Medal, is being recognised for his contributions to the field of information.



Samir Mutawi

Children's Village in Amman in 1988. Mr. Tukan's SOS Children's Village in Aqaba won him the World Habitat Award in 1993.

MOVING HOMEWARDS: UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa Farid Rahman is taking up a new post as special adviser based in Islamabad, Pakistan, his place of origin. There he will undertake special assignments on behalf of the United Nations Children's Fund Executive Director Carol Bellamy. Mr. Rahman held several senior positions in UNICEF including representative to China and Mongolia, representative to Sudan, deputy regional director for the Middle East and North Africa, and representative to Sri Lanka and the Maldives. He also worked at UNICEF's New York headquarters in a senior capacity in the Office of Planning and Evaluation. Mr. Farid will be succeeded by Ibrahim Fall of Senegal in mid-December. Dr. Fall served as UNICEF representative in Lagos, Nigeria since 1995. He has also been chief of the Africa Section at headquarters. Dr. Fall joined UNICEF in 1976. He is a graduate of the University of Bordeaux where he earned a degree in political science and he obtained a masters in international relations, public administration and comparative politics at the University of California at Berkeley. He obtained his doctorate in political science and economic development from the Fondation Nationale de Science Politique in Paris.

RECUPERATING: More good news is that Secretary General of the Ministry of Information Mohammad Amin is recuperating well after recent surgery. Among the many persons who visited him in hospital with get-well wishes was Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, himself a medical doctor.

SUCCESS IS HIS BLUEPRINT: Once again Jordanian architects continue to make their mark and receive recognition for their talents. Last week the kudos went to Jafar I. Tukan, a seasoned recipient of several awards for architecture and proprietor of Jafar Tukan & Partners, Architects & Engineers. This time it was his design of a theology school in Al Medina, Saudi Arabia that won him, along with his Saudi Arabian associates on the project, Abalkhail Consulting Engineers, the Al Medina Award for Architecture for 1997. The project consists of a school building, mosque, library, auditorium, student housing, commercial facilities and a hotel, in addition to services, and that rarity of all rarities, parking. The merits of the design were its architectural and functional excellence, total response to climatic and environmental properties of the locale, through a "spatial composition inspired by Arab Islamic tradition in contemporary architectural terms." In 1992 Mr. Tukan was the recipient of the Arab Architect Award presented by the Organisation of Arab Cities, which also presented him with the Arab Project Award for his SOS

IT OCCURRED TO THEM: United States Information Service Information Specialist Apkar Hagopian retires after nearly 23 years of work at the U.S. Embassy in Amman. Although he made no announcements of his future plans, he certainly has some R&R coming to him. The embassy head-hunters have studied a few dozen applications of candidates for Hagopian's position. Their final choice was the perspicacious Ali Kassay. As fate would have it, Mr. Hagopian was once Kassay's English language teacher at the De LaSalle School back in the early 70's. Kassay, the writer of the column "It occurred to me..." right here in the Jordan Times, obtained a BSc in Manchester, England and a masters in political science in foreign service at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

YOUR NAME UP IN LIGHTS: Now here this. The new Palace of Justice is planning to install electronic facilities that should take the pressure off finding where one should show oneself when summoned to court. A billboard, along the lines of those found at major airports everywhere, is being designed to provide information about nearly everyone and everything in a case, except perhaps the verdict. Flashed across the board will be the names of plaintiff, defendants, witness, judges, as well as the scheduled time of the case hearing and its room number. The project is expected to cost JD1.2 million. See you in court.

Jennifer Hamarneh

Catch the wind chip talk

By Jean-Claude Elias

EVER SINCE the PC was launched in the early eighties, hardware (the equipment) has been chasing software (the programmes), trying to catch up with it — an apparently contradictory situation as they are supposed to work in harmony. Both elements are normally designed to complement each other to allow users to make the best of computer systems. One expects hardware and software to be well synchronized and fine tuned as one entity. For the past 15 years, however, software has been improved much faster than hardware.

A detailed technical analysis may reveal several reasons why this is the case, but the main one is very simple: software designers and hardware manufacturers are different people in different corporations. Admittedly, there is some kind of cooperation between them, otherwise nothing would work at all. Unfortunately the level of cooperation is not what it is supposed to be. Software developers like Microsoft, Corel or Lotus keep releasing products that are increasingly demanding in terms of hardware performance. Manufacturers like Intel, Seagate or Western Digital sometimes just can't keep up with them. When Windows 3.1 Operating System (OS) was launched about 10 years ago, the average PC proved to have inadequate equipment resources to allow the OS to run at acceptable speed. Memory was too little, hard disks slow and microprocessors (CPUs) too weak for the job. The hardware was only suitable for the simpler MS-DOS OS.

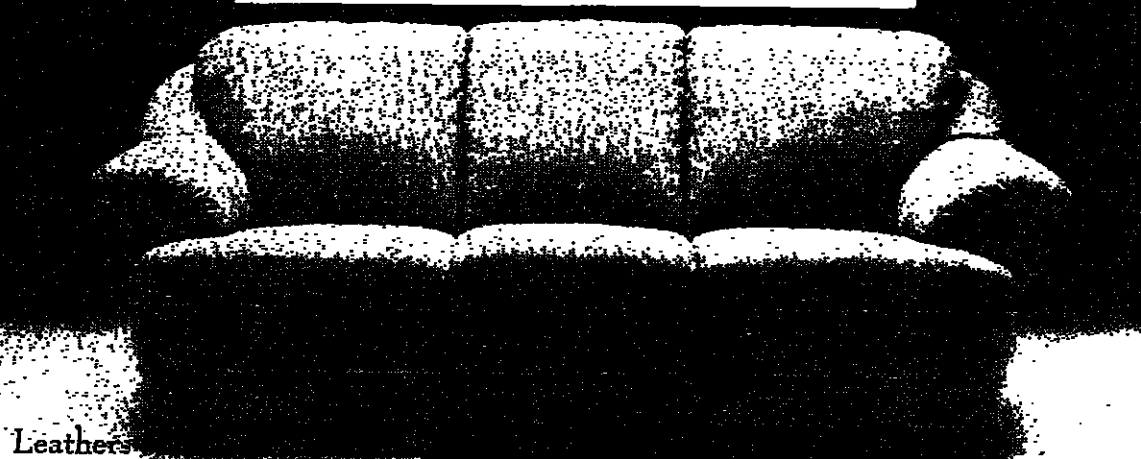
We then saw an improvement about every six months — memory grew cheaper, hard disks enlarged in storage capacity and speed and CPUs became truly powerful. A "486" computer with 16MB (million bytes or characters) and a 120MB hard disk would ensure satisfactory performance under Windows 3.1.

By the end of 1994 hardware had joined software at power



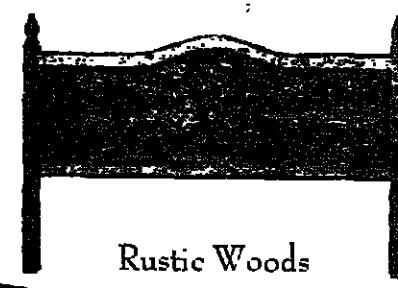
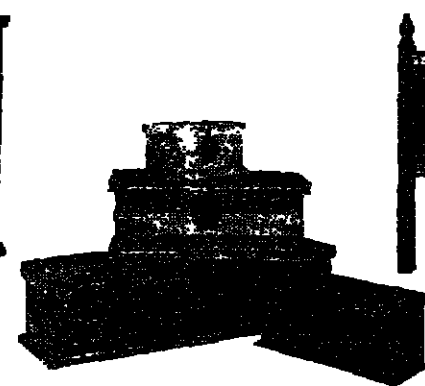
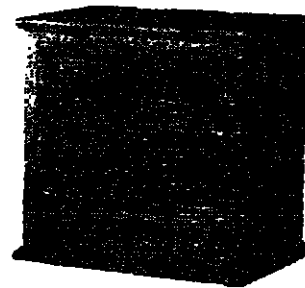
level. Users thought that plain sailing was going to last for a while. Microsoft didn't see it that way. At the end of 1994 they released the now ubiquitous Windows95 OS. In terms of overall performance, users were back to square one — hardware, again, was not up to the job. True, Windows95 introduced many features that users needed and were expecting, but not at the expense of global performance and speed. The new OS was too big, too heavy for a "486" CPU. Hardware manufacturers counter-attacked with the Pentium. Starting with the ill-fated Pentium 75, to reach monstrously powerful CPUs like the current Pentium II 300 model. Naturally memory makers and hard disk designers did their bit too, and 2 GB (2 billion characters) are now commonly found. So after 3 years of fighting, hardware is again delivering good performance under Windows95, just like the 486 was doing under Windows 3.1 in 1994. What does Microsoft have in store for us in the short future? There doesn't seem to be any indication of drastic OS changes. Next year will see the release of Windows98 and Windows NT 4.0. Both systems however do not represent a major change, they are but minor enhancements of existing versions. Windows95 on the other hand was truly different from Windows 3.1. With Microsoft maintaining their Windows 95/98 OS and Intel's plans to produce a successor for the Pentium CPU before the year 2,000 hardware may well let software run after it for a change. The new processor, code-named "Merced" for the time being, may take Windows-based systems to new heights of performance. Until ...

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مركز الندة لتجارة المفروشات

Jordan and Iraq to consider expanding annual trade protocol later this month

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Iraq will open talks later this month on ways to expand their annual trade protocol under which Baghdad is expected to raise the amount of free oil supplies to the Kingdom, an official source said Wednesday.

The source said the meeting would be held in two weeks but could not set a date.

Industry and Trade Minister Hani Mulki told the Jordan Times that Amman had not yet decided on its 1998 oil

needs from Iraq, its sole crude supplier for years. He said the amounts needed would be defined by the end of this year.

Under its 1997 protocol, Iraq agreed to supply Jordan with 75,000 barrels of oil per day, much of it for free, in repayment of an old debt.

Despite United Nations sanctions imposed on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the U.N. has allowed Jordan to continue oil imports from Baghdad.

The annual protocol allows Jordan to sell

Iraq items sanctioned by the embargo such as medicine, food and other humanitarian supplies.

Jordan, once Iraq's main trade partner, has been pushing for an increase in the amount of free oil supplies to the country which stood at \$300 million this year.

Jordan supplied Iraq with goods and services worth some \$255 million under this year's protocol.

The source said Jordan's private sector was pushing for an expansion of the protocol to include more commodities that are not listed in

the recent U.N.-Iraq oil-for-food deal.

He gave no further details.

Many Jordanian traders have criticised tough Jordanian enforcement of U.N. sanctions on Iraq, saying they were unable to sell commodities that were originally created for the Iraqi market in other countries.

Earlier this year, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein ordered a \$50 million increase in this year's oil grant to Jordan, which reached \$250 million in 1996.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 03/12/1997											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OFFER PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
346,000	249,000	ARAB BANK	15.3	1.20	9	7880	2635720	333.00	332.00	1.00	+
2,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8.0	0.00	20	14100	26996	1.92	1.91	0.01	-
3,500	1,900	BANK OF JORDAN	5.9	0.00	4	875	1644	1.93	1.88	0.05	-
1,190	890	MID. EAST INV. BK.	68.3	0.00	2	300	312	1.04	1.04	-	-
2,680	2,150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.3	6.08	9	10700	27621	2.60	2.60	-	-
5,300	4,600	THE HOUSING BK.	15.7	3.70	2	1350	7088	5.26	5.25	0.01	-
4,180	1,850	JOR. KUWAIT BANK	10.6	0.00	12	10887	1291	1.97	1.95	0.02	-
1,050	740	JOR. GULF BANK	4.4	9.46	3	1500	1120	1.75	1.74	0.01	-
4,050	2,900	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.0	3.25	80	66344	139926	3.05	2.95	0.10	-
1,510	1,110	UNION BK. S.V. INV.	9.0	0.00	2	1700	1948	1.12	1.15	0.03	+
3,900	3,080	JOR. INV. FUND	24.1	0.00	2	850	3148	3.80	3.70	0.05	-
1,900	870	BEIT AL-KHAL (BEITNA)	5	17.05	3	1000	880	89	88	0.01	-
5,150	3,370	ARAB BANKING CO.	18.1	0.00	3	479	1776	3.75	3.75	-	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 238.78 %CHG: -0.43 152 97965 2870022											
2,300	2,100	HOLY LAND INSUR.	6.2	0.00	2	509	611	1.23	1.20	0.03	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 115.83 %CHG: -0.03 2 509 611											
2,050	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.4	5.15	22	20150	38997	1.92	1.94	0.02	+
4,030	1,320	ARAB ELECTRICITY	15.5	4.42	4	650	1678	2.65	2.60	0.05	-
1,550	900	NATL. PORTFOLIO	0.00	0.00	1	6350	7117	1.12	1.12	-	-
8,900	6,700	ALFA I	14.9	6.02	11	1924	13897	10.31	8.30	0.01	-
1,680	1,150	MID. EAST HOTELS	19.8	0.00	10	3525	4523	1.26	1.30	0.04	+
3,900	2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.8	0.00	14	7050	26498	3.73	3.76	0.03	+
1,100	900	SABA EDUCATION	9	0.00	7	14350	13776	9.6	9.6	-	-
2,230	1,630	UNIFIED CO.	8.1	6.43	4	850	1625	1.71	1.71	-	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 108.72 %CHG: -0.47 80 54949 110180											
4,450	3,010	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.9	3.54	10	3618	11251	3.10	3.11	0.01	+
7,050	5,570	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.1	3.08	9	4500	29213	6.45	6.50	0.05	+
11,150	9,200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.2	8.43	1	1500	5275	10.57	10.55	0.02	-
3,250	1,330	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	9	0.00	7	3700	5338	1.46	1.45	0.01	-
4,700	3,320	ARAB PHARM. IND.	11.4	4.84	9	7080	29240	4.13	4.13	-	-
1,670	1,050	JOR. PIPES MANUFACT.	17.1	5.80	7	2350	2940	1.37	1.38	0.01	+
1,470	1,050	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	1	5000	6500	1.82	1.82	-	-
3,850	2,220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.5	10.59	1	1000	2360	2.37	2.36	0.01	-
690	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.7	0.00	14	7350	3381	46	46	-	-
770	510	NATIONAL IND.	9	0.00	12	10100	5467	45	43	0.01	-
1,200	430	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	4	2150	920	44	44	-	-
920	530	JOR. ROCKWOOL IND.	9	0.00	1	250	143	57	57	-	-
3,000	1,780	NATL. CABLE WIRE-NET	28.2	0.00	10	4000	7038	1.78	1.76	0.02	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 117.67 %CHG: -0.36 169 175978 214541											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 172.27 %CHG: -0.10 403 329401 319354											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 03/12/1997											
620	410	MACH. EDP. RENT. MAIN	9	0.00	1	2500	1250	51	50	0.01	-
570	300	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	1	1000	330	35	35	-	-
610	370	JOR. TRADE PAC.	9.4	0.00	20	62350	22446	37	36	0.01	-
800	560	UNION INV. 501	9	0.00	12	45100	10373	73	72	0.01	-
570	360	ARAB FIK. INVEST.	9	0.00	3	15650	6407	42	40	0.02	-
950	720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	9	0.00	6	5350	4728	85	89	0.04	+
780	510	AL-BANILIAN 751	65.3	0.00	1	850	366	69	68	0.01	-
1,630	1,050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	9	0.00	2	1000	855	1.17	1.17	0.00	-
400	140	JOR. IND. MATCH-JEMCO	9	0.00	2	1000	170	1.63	1.61	0.02	-
690	440	ARAB FOOD & FEED	9	0.00	14	16300	8001	51	50	0.01	-
640	330	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	12	1750	1860	24	22	0.02	-
1,750	380	NATL. MULT. ENG. RANICO	9	0.00	24	91700	38189	42	41	0.01	-
660	580	HIDESTOCK 751	9	0.00	1	450	167	63	62	0.01	-
400	260	UNION TOBACCO 751	9	0.00	6	6850	1450	30	29	0.01	-
34	470	IND. ENG.	9	0.00	6	26250	14163	56	53	0.03	-
7,820	560	NATL. POULTRY	93.2	0.00	19	11300	4666	66	67	0.01	-
1,000	660	ALT. ALUMINUM 751	45.8	0.00	1	300	285	1.00	99	0.01	-
1,050	720	ARAB INT. TOOD FACT.	9	0.00	4	3500	1820	81	77	0.04	-
1,000	810	MODERN FOOD IND. 751	28.4	2.86	1	6000	21000	3.50	3.50	-	-
3,750	3,420	ARAB STEEL PIPES	28.4	2.86	1	6000	21000	3.50	3.50	-	-
GRAND TOTAL 159 303700 144857											

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1997
By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You and your team perform brilliantly today. It's important to make sure the job's done perfectly. Itty bitty errors will be noticed and pointed out. You don't need to have any more of that, so do your best to avoid it. Encourage your associates to strive for perfection, too.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) An authority figure — boss, teacher, parent — will be annoyed if he or she catches you daydreaming. If you show mild interest, your preoccupation will go undetected. You're pretty good at covering up your inner thoughts. Do that again today.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Get together with a friend you haven't seen in ages. If you wait much longer, other obligations will interfere again. A gathering at your house should go well. Don't just think about what you can get this holiday season. Think about what you can give. That's a lot more satisfying.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Don't let your money go down the drain today. An idea that works for somebody else may be nothing but anguish for you. The only investments worth making now involve home improvements. Fix your place up the way you've always wanted and you can't go wrong.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Something you thought you'd have to replace might be salvageable after all. You're a good planner, and a visionary for the future. You have a friend, however, who's better at the nuts and bolts part of the operation. That's the person you need to talk to.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) One of your assignments is something you're not sure how to do. You don't like to be in the spotlight. You'd much rather have somebody else take over that honour. Actually, you're doing just fine. Continue to follow the plan and your success is assured.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) The controversy you've had raging lately needs to be resolved. The disagreement seemed important at the time, but now it's starting to look trivial. It might even be getting funny. This is an indication of growth and health.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Have you got your holiday greeting cards out yet? That would be the perfect chore for today. Not only will you beat the rush, but you'll also inspire your whole family to get busy and get theirs out soon. Again, you're doing a good deed just by doing what comes naturally.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) New skills you're acquiring will lead to an advance in your career. You do need to be applying yourself in a marketable field, but you don't need to be totally inhibited. If you do what you love, the money will follow, right? Today, that looks quite likely.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Sending money to a distant place will help the people who receive it and make you feel better as well. By getting involved, you're manifesting your best destiny. You're not only an entrepreneur, but also a philanthropist. Share your wealth in a way that benefits others.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you distribute your resources wisely, you'll make a good impression on an older person. That one could be in a position to increase your income. You're going to be creative today, that's assured. Be practical too, and you'll win in more ways than you can imagine.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You're under pressure, but that's all right. You're forced to think on your feet and be creative. You have resources you've barely tapped. A person you know from a big company is helpful. Don't be afraid to make unreasonable requests.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1997
By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You and your group will push hard to get that job out this morning. The requirement is, again, that everything be precisely right. Make sure that happens. Don't be fooled: A person who appears not to care actually does care very much. There is no prize for second place.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) There's still an oppressive presence in your life, but you can put up with this jerk. Try to pay attention, too. There will be a test. Tonight, meet with the one friend you love best. That will make up for all the suffering you've had to endure.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Are you having a celebration tonight? Better get provisions on your way home from work. If you spread word that you're entertaining, you'll be surprised at how many take you up on the offer. You're interested in everyone else, and that makes you very interesting to them.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Nobody can stretch a dime farther than you can. If you scrimp and save this morning, you'll be glad you did. There's an opportunity to travel coming up this weekend, possibly starting tonight. Use the money you save to buy a nice dinner out, on the road.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Stop struggling with something that doesn't seem to be working right. Go to an expert for advice. It'll be worth the expense. You're the leader in most situations, but today you'll be wise to take a back seat. Let somebody else tell you what to do.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You're way out on the skinny branches. Don't look down! If you concentrate on the task at hand, you'll be fine. You're much better at this than you realise. And besides, somebody out there likes you. So disregard any fears you might imagine and keep climbing.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You'll find it easy to express yourself this morning. That trend diminishes as the day progresses. The requests you make now have a higher than average chance of being accepted, too. Don't put them off a moment longer. Strike while you're hot.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You know what other people want. They, of course, don't have a clue about you. This time of year, that habit's counterproductive. If you don't give them a push in the right direction, they're likely to get you the wrong thing, again. Let them know.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A contact you make tonight could be valuable. Somebody you know well could give you a gentle shove in the right direction. Tell your friends what you'd like to be doing next and see if they have any good ideas. It looks like you could get very lucky.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) If you're planning to travel this season, buy your tickets now. If you've been thinking about acquiring a new skill, sign up for the class. This doesn't have to be work-related. Go ahead and try something whimsical.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You want to set a goal high enough to be interesting this year, but you don't want to scare yourself to death. Don't worry. You'll be up for whatever challenge you can imagine. Aquarians invented the computer and put men on the moon. Shoot high.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You're chugging along, checking things off your list. Focus on items still to be done rather than starting new projects. You won't have to be told what to celebrate tonight. That should be obvious. Start by acknowledging yourself for having made it through a very tough day.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Sturdy shoes
- One-celled organisms
- Keep on spinning?
- Craft of Venice
- Like sidewalk cafes
- In a goofy way
- Ben of The Cars
- Govt. advisory grp.
- Actress Merkel
- Falsehood
- Asian car make
- Asian holiday
- Orch. section
- Auction ending?
- Lepidoptera's equipment
- O.T. book
- Archaeological site
- Toothy deg.
- Unconscionable
- Add moisture, in poetry
- Hatchet-burying occasions
- Beauty's mate
- Memmert
- Dancer Calloway
- Botanist Gray
- Silly billy
- Medico
- Gone by
- Advanced deg.
- Mass prayer
- Peak on Crete
- Wildbeest
- W. coast airport
- Yucatan uncle
- Operate
- Egt.-Syn., once
- In need of more scratch?
- Praise too highly
- Theseus's wife
- 20 Questions classification
- Gain control over
- Deep way to sleep

DOWN

- Anita, the novelist
- Temporary relief
- Like arias
- Cotton separator
- Jack Lemmon
- Bumps in the night
- 7 layers
- Mass prayer
- Peak on Crete
- Progressing
- NYC summer hrs.
- 12 Sealth
- United
- Loft Peter
- Wimsey's creator
- Lofty tennis shot
- Del-sandwich letters
- Purchased hair
- Counterpart of
- Casino staff
- Duncan and others
- Party conservatives
- Newborn
- Firmly
- Old-time Islamic leader
- Veronica Redgrave title role
- Rolling freight container
- Creighton, the general
- Workroom
- John, the political pundit
- Buddy
- Canadian actor
- Canou

By Tom

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Bilbeisi: MENA economic summit aim at involving Israel in the region's economy

THE BASIC aim of the MENA economic summit is to involve Israel economically with the countries of the region after having been isolated by the Arab boycott which negatively affected the Israeli economy," Fakhri Bilbeisi, a member of the board of the Jordanian Businessmen Association said in a lecture. He added that in the longer term, the aim is to involve Israel in large regional projects and then comes the step of indirect normalisation.

Mr. Bilbeisi said: "To our surprise, a number of projects which we have signed, were prepared beforehand and were not the result of discussions during the (Doha) summit." He indicated that through the economic summits, Israel has managed to enter into many projects in Jordan at the lowest costs. "There could also be other things that were discussed and may surface at a later date," he noted.

The lecturer spoke about the partnership with the European Union and pointed out that the implementation of the agreement which was signed last month would have negative effects on Jordanian exports and the banking sector as well as the services sector. He attributed that to the limited quality of Jordanian products and, second, to the prices compared to similar ones in Europe.

He attributed the higher cost on Jordanian products in the future to the implemen-

tation of intellectual property rights laws during a short period that would not be enough to qualify the Jordanian products to enter European markets. Mr. Bilbeisi explained that the entry of Jordanian products to European markets depend largely on adhering to quality and international standards and specifications on one side and the value added from another side. However, he indicated, the period granted for our industries to reach the international standards and specification is not enough despite more than five billion ECU's (European Currency Units) that will be provided for the countries of the region to qualify (Al Ra'i).

Ministry of Energy assures owners of gas stations, gas distributors of raising their commissions

OWNERS OF gas stations and gas distributors have decided to postpone a stoppage that they planned for this month until the beginning of next year after they were assured by the minister of energy that the Ministerial Development Committee has approved an increase in the percentage of commission they receive. They were told that the Council of Ministers will announce a decision to this effect before the end of this month.

The owners and distributors have expressed their dissatisfaction with the commission they are paid stressing that the return is very low for their investments (Al Ra'i).

Seoul receives massive bailout under agreement with IMF

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reached agreement Wednesday on a massive bailout for Seoul, the finance ministry said, as reports put the amount of the rescue package at \$57 billion.

There was no immediate announcement that any accord had been signed. Nor was there any comment on the ministry statement from the IMF, whose chief Michel Camdessus arrived in Seoul earlier in the day.

But the statement said that all disagreements over outstanding issues such as mergers and acquisitions, foreign stockholding limits and opening of the bond market had been resolved.

"South Korea accepted IMF demands for the quick opening of the short-term bond market and to allow foreigners to join mergers and acquisitions of South Korean financial institutions," it said.

They also agreed to set

the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate for next year at three per cent, and a higher rate from 1999, it said.

Finance ministry sources said the only thing that appeared to be holding up the signing was the IMF's insistence on getting written guarantees from the three leading candidates in the presidential election that they would stick to the terms if elected.

Leaks of the terms sent stock prices rebounding for the first time in weeks, with many blue chips closing limit-up.

The terms included the raising of the individual foreign stock ownership limit from the current 26 per cent to 50 per cent this year, and 55 per cent next year.

South Korea agreed to pass a financial reform bill this year which would ensure the independence of the central bank and create a new financial supervisory body, a source said.

Jordan's first GDR listing seen trading next week

By Suleiman Al Khalidi Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan's first Global Depository Receipt (GDR) offering, by Arab Potash Company, is expected to begin trading next Monday on the London Stock Exchange, the issue's local advisor said Wednesday.

"Judging by the feedback received so far from the targeted investor base, the reaction to the offering has been healthy and in line with expectations," said Omar Masri, head of Atlas Investment Group (AIG).

Amman-based AIG was chosen as local advisor to the issue by lead manager Nomura International.

The \$35-\$40 million GDR offering was launched last Nov. 20 in Tokyo, followed by roadshows in Australia, Europe and the U.S.

The placing of the GDR's allocations and its pricing is expected

next Friday after the U.S. investor roadshow which began last Monday, said Mr. Masri.

Asked about the extent of investor demand anticipated, Mr. Masri said: Raising the targeted amount will not be a problem.

Nomura went ahead with the launch of the issue as scheduled despite the recent upheaval in Asian financial markets after a limited fallout of the crisis on Middle Eastern equities markets in contrast to hard hit fixed income securities, analysts say.

Investment managers in Jordan said the issue has so far attracted substantial demand from top-tier European investors in particular but the extent of demand would only be ascertained after it is closed.

"The bulk of demand should come from European-based investors," Mr. Masri said.

Arab Potash mandated Nomura last September to set a GDR issue price

range at a premium to the current market price of around JD6.5 (\$9.18) per share.

The success of Jordan's first GDR will help attract foreign fund buying into the Amman Financial Market, after a landmark decision last September to lift a 50 per cent foreign ownership ceilings on most listed stock, bankers say.

Analysts say Arab Potash, a major world producer, has good long-term earnings potential. They forecast current sales of around \$180 million annually to double after future projects to expand its Dead Sea's mineral extraction are completed by 2000.

Jordan's government has a 55.4 per cent holding while Kuwait, Iraq, the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank and other Arab government's hold minority stakes in the firm.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7882	0.5838	1.4270	128.62	1.4176	1733.10	1.9926	5.9165
DE Mark	0.5665	-	0.3355	0.8071	72.72	0.8014	979.53	1.1269	3.3464
GB Sterling	1.8840	2.9788	-	2.4030	216.68	2.3872	2916.81	3.3535	9.9575
CH Franc	0.7008	1.2282	0.4156	-	90.11	0.9927	1213.66	139.54	4.1432
JP Yen	0.0078	1.3737	0.4611	1.1086	-	1.1013	13.48	154.80	4.5964
CA Dollar	0.7054	1.2389	0.4197	1.0007	1.10	-	1213.86	139.63	4.1460
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0189	0.3422	0.8822	1950.07	0.9174	-	11.48	3.4115
NL Guilder	0.5018	0.8271	0.2977	0.7161	64.52	0.7112	869.78	-	2.9822
FR Franc	0.1690	0.2987	0.1003	0.2408	21.72	0.2385	33.57	33.6700	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7505	0.3770	3.6410	0.3044	3.6729	1624.00	3.4045
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2573	0.5325	5.1427	0.4299	5.1877	2152.54	4.8086
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0811	0.98	406.35	0.9077
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8780	9.9483	-	9.96	0.8073	9.74	4042.44	9.0305
Qatar Dinar	0.2745	0.1945	1.0301	1.0301	-	0.0836	1.01	418.57	0.9350
Kuwait Dinar	3.2857	2.3253	12.3230	1.2387	11.96	-	12.07	5007.39	0.9360
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0211	1.0228	0.9913	0.0829	-	414.93	0.9269
Lebanese/1000	0.66	0.4848	2.4610	0.2474	2.3891	0.1997	2.4100	-	2.2339
Egyptian	0.2937	0.2080	1.1016	0.1107	1.0695	0.0894	1.0788	447.64	-

Energy			Mid-East Currencies				
Oil	Last	Previous	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY
Brent	18.17	18.37	SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4717	0.15833	0.39075
W. Texas	18.75	18.64	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4817	0.16189	0.39879
Bonny	18.17	18.37	KW Dinar	3.2857	5.81395	1.95122	4.69253
Dubai	17.40	17.25	BH Dinar	0.3770	4.69253	1.57505	3.78788
UL Gas	182.00	183.00	CY Pound	1.9272	3.4078	1.1439	2.7505

JOD Cross Rates			Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)				
Currency	Buy	Sell	Period	3M	6M	9M	1Y
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	USD	5.83	5.81	5.81	5.81
GB Sterling	1.1901	1.1961	GBP	7.44	7.62	7.69	7.81
DE Mark	0.3977	0.3987	JPY	0.31	0.04	0.05	0.12
CH Franc	0.493	0.4955	DEM	3.62	3.65	3.75	4.00
FR Franc	0.1188	0.1194	FRF	3.43	3.58	3.73	3.98
JP Yen	0.5488	0.5512	CHF	1.48	1.56	1.68	1.87
NL Guilder	0.3529	0.3547	ITL	6.11	6.00	6.70	5.41
IT Lira	0.4063	0.4083					5.27

Main Equity Indices							
Source	Index	Value	Change	% Chg	High	Low	P.Cls
New York	DOW JONES	8006.68	-18.15	-0.23	8034.99	7987.59	8016.83
New York	S&P 500	970.66	-1.02	-0.1	973.83	968.72	971.68
London	FT-SE 100	4970.7	-6.9	-0.14	4988.1	4951.1	4977.6
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	16585.51	-324.78	-1.92	16960.7	16582.6	16810.3
Paris	CAC 40	2892.35	-10.74	-0.37	2921.78	2892.86	2913.09
Frankfurt	DAX	4082.89	9.93	0.24	4087.94	4055.5	4072.95

Arab Bank continues to offer its advanced banking services

THE ARAB BANK continues providing advanced information technology services for its clients. After the introduction of new services on its Automated Teller Machines (the number of which is now 55 in Jordan), the Bank opened the machines (ATMs) to Visa and Plus cards, in Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. This move would allow 600 million Visa/Plus cardholders to use these ATMs to withdraw cash through the Visa network. The Bank also is working towards linking other branches' ATMs in Egypt, Lebanon, Bahrain, Qatar and Yemen. Moreover, the Arab Bank ATMs are already linked with local networks in Cyprus and the Gulf (UAE, Qatar and Bahrain). The Bank is currently expanding its ATM network to acquire local and international cards, and has already started installing coloured and modern machines at some branches, supermarkets and Queen Alia Airport.

The Bank has issued recently Visa Electron cards for the UAE customers and will issue them shortly in Jordan for ATM cardholders. This card can be used as an ATM card in the country of issuance, and for withdrawals on 350,000 ATMs all over the world. In addition, it is used for purchases locally and internationally at merchants equipped with Point of Sale machines, the number of which at present is one million. The Arab Bank Visa Electron card is a photocard with a unique design and colour.

GULFINVEST INTERNATIONAL K.S.C.

PRESS RELEASE

Jordan Investment Trust PLC — ("Jordinvest")

Launch of the Private Placement for a New Investment Banking Institution in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

The Sponsors, TrustHouse Consultants for Finance & Investment (Dr. Mohammad Said Nabulsi), Jordan, and Gulfinvest International K.S.C., Kuwait, are pleased to announce the launch of the private placement for the establishment of Jordan Investment Trust PLC ("Jordinvest") in December 1997. The Company will be established in Jordan as a public shareholding investment banking company, for which the Sponsors are seeking to raise JD20 million (US\$28 million). It will be the most highly capitalised investment banking company in Jordan. The focus of the Company will be to attract foreign capital into Jordan and to underwrite, merge, raise equity and provide other corporate finance services to Jordanian companies.

There are eight institutional founding shareholders who have already subscribed to the Company, including the Arab Bank PLC (Jordan), the Arab Finance Corporation (Lebanon), Blakeney Management (U.K.), Gulfinvest International K.S.C. (Kuwait), Jordan Kuwait Bank (Jordan), Kuwait Investment Projects Company (Kuwait), Lebanon Invest SAL (Lebanon) and the Near East Opportunities Fund managed by Martin Currie Investment Management Ltd (U.K.). The commitments of the aforementioned total a minimum of US\$8 million. Gulfinvest International K.S.C., Kuwait, will subscribe a minimum of 10 per cent of the total paid-in capital of the Company. The placing syndicate comprises Gulfinvest International K.S.C., Kuwait and Lebanon Invest SAL. The Arab Bank PLC, Jordan, are the Bankers to the issue.

The private placement for founding shareholders will begin in December 1997 and end in January 1998. It is anticipated that up to 75 per cent of the capital will be raised through this private placement mostly from outside Jordan. Subsequently, 25 per cent of the capital will be raised through a public offering in Jordan. The Sponsors anticipate that the shareholders will be comprised of a select group of Western and Arab institutional, family and private investors who are interested in investing in the emerging market of Jordan. The capital may be increased at the discretion of the Sponsors.

Upon incorporation, expected to be in the first quarter of 1998, the Company will seek to list its Shares on the Amman Financial Market (AFM).

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Brazil fear European World Cup plot

MARSEILLE (AFP) — An upset Brazilian coach Mario Zagallo is convinced of a European plot to stop Brazil winning a record fifth World Cup.

"There is a European conspiracy," fumed Zagallo as he prepared for Thursday's draw for the 1998 World Cup finals in France.

The Brazilian is upset over FIFA's decision to have two European sides in either Brazil's or Argentina's first-round group.

And he made it clear that he is no doubts that the two European sides will be drawn in Group A with Brazil.

"The World Cup in France will be the most difficult in history. During the finals it will be the rest of the world against Brazil and it is clear they will do anything to stop Brazil winning," said Zagallo.

His worst fear is that Brazil will be drawn with England, who failed to get seeded. Olympic champions Nigeria and new comers Croatia.

Such as draw also concerns English coach Glenn Hoddle.

"What we really don't want is Brazil, Croatia and Nigeria — we don't want a Group of Death situation," admitted Hoddle.

But Hoddle added that he

would be more than happy if England are drawn with Brazil.

"Then we don't have to play them again until the final," he said. "If you are going to get turned over it would be better to do it in the first round when you've still got the opportunity of going through by finishing second."

"I am sure other coaches won't be too happy having England in their group," he added.

The important seeded spots have gone to current World Cup holders Brazil, hosts France, Germany, Italy, Argentina, Spain, Romania and Holland and, to ensure that none of the five African countries qualified for the finals will be in the same group. Thursday's draw will be carried out in four stages.

1: The eight seeds will be drawn to see which group they will head. It has already been decided that Brazil will top Group A and France Group C.

2: Eight of the nine remaining European qualifiers will be drawn.

3: The five African finalists, South Africa, Cameroon, Morocco, Nigeria, Tunisia and the three CONCACAF countries, Jamaica, United States and Mexico will be drawn.

4: The remaining quali-

fiers, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Japan, Iran and the remaining European team not picked in the second stage of the draw.

For the first time in World Cup history the draw will take place in a stadium — after a special match pitting a European team against the Rest of the World.

Europe is being coached by Franz Beckenbauer and the Rest of the World by former Brazilian coach Carlos Alberto Parreira.

More than 20,000 youngsters have been invited to the ceremony by Michael Platini, president of the French Organising Committee.

"We wanted the World Cup to be one for the whole world, and in particular for young people," explained the former French international.

But organisers are holding their breath that the mistral winds that have battered Marseille all week ease up by Thursday night.

With the winds gusting up to 150kph, an emergency plan has been put in place if the mistral continues.

Although the Europe vs. the Rest of the World match will go ahead as planned, the draw will be switched indoors if the winds prove too strong.

AFP factfile of 1998 World Cup qualifiers

UNITED STATES

- Population: 258,300,000
- Area: 9,364,000 sq km
- Capital: Washington
- Federation: United States Soccer Federation founded in 1913.

- Colours: White jersey with blue trim, white shorts, white socks.
- World Cup record: 6th appearance (1930, 34, 50, 90, 94, 98).

- Semi-finalists 1930.
- Copa America record: Semi-finalists 1995.
- How they qualified: Finished 2nd in CONCACAF Zone Final Group.

Qualifying results:		
Semi-finals		
United States 2	Guatemala 0	
United States 2	Trinidad and Tobago 0	
Trinidad and Tobago 0	United States 1	
Costa Rica 2	United States 1	
United States 2	Costa Rica 1	
Guatemala 2	United States 2	
Final Group		
Jamaica 0	United States 0	
United States 3	Canada 0	
Costa Rica 3	United States 2	
United States 2	Mexico 2	
El Salvador 1	United States 1	
United States 1	Costa Rica 0	
United States 1	Jamaica 1	
Mexico 0	United States 0	
Canada 0	United States 3	
United States 4	El Salvador 2	
• Top goalscorer: 5 - Eric Wynalda		
• Coach: Steve Sampson.		
• Fixtures:		
February 1998: CONCACAF Gold Cup including Feb 1 USA vs. Cuba, Feb 15 USA vs. Costa Rica.		

YUGOSLAVIA

- Population: 10,394,026
- Area: 102,173 sq km
- Capital: Belgrade
- Federation: Fudbalski Savez Jugoslavije founded in 1919.

- Colours: Blue jersey, white shorts, red socks.
- World Cup record: 9th appearance (1930, 50, 54, 58, 62, 74, 82, 90, 98).

- European Championship record: Finalists 1960, 68
- How they qualified: Defeated Hungary in play-off having finished 2nd in European Zone Group 6.

Qualifying results:		
Yugoslavia 3	Faroe Islands 1	
Yugoslavia 6	Malta 0	
Yugoslavia 1	Yugoslavia 8	
Faroe Islands 1	Yugoslavia 0	
Yugoslavia 1	Czech Republic 0	
Spain 2	Yugoslavia 2	
C. Republic 1	Yugoslavia 1	
Yugoslavia 1	Spain 1	
Yugoslavia 2	Slovakia 0	
Slovakia 1	Yugoslavia 1	
Malta 0	Yugoslavia 5	
Play-off		
Hungary 1	Yugoslavia 7	
Yugoslavia 5	Hungary 0	
Top goalscorer: 14 - Predrag Mijatovic		
• Coach: Stojanovic Santrac		
• Fixtures: To be announced.		

SOUTH AFRICA

- Population: 39,000,000
- Area: 1,223,410 sq km
- Capital: Pretoria
- Federation: South African Football Association founded in 1991

- Colours: Yellow jersey, green shorts, white socks
- World Cup record: 1st appearance (1998)
- African Nations Cup record: Winner 1996 in only appearance

- How they qualified: Finished 1st in African Zone Group 3

Qualifying results:		
Preliminary round		
Malawi 0	South Africa 1	
South Africa 3	Malawi 0	
Group 3		
S. Africa 1	D. R. Congo (form. Zaire) 0	
Zambia 0	South Africa 0	
Congo 2	South Africa 0	
D. R. Congo 1	South Africa 2	
South Africa 3	Zambia 0	
South Africa 1	Congo 0	
• Top goalscorer: 4 - Phil Masinga		
• Coach: Clive Barker		
• Fixtures:		
December 7, 1997: South Africa vs. Brazil		
December 12-21, 1997: Confederation Cup in Riyadh including Dec 15 vs. Czech Republic, Dec 15 v United Arab Emirates, Dec 17 vs. Uruguay.		
February 9-28, 1998: African Nations Cup in Burkina Faso.		



Rainer Widmayer (R) of the third division soccer club SSV Ulm and Krassimir Balakov (L) of the first division soccer club VfB Stuttgart fight for the ball during their German soccer cup match in Ulm. Stuttgart won the match 3-1 (Reuters photo)

Holders Stuttgart through to German Cup quarters

BONN (AFP) — German Cup holders Stuttgart overcame an early scare against third division side SSV Ulm Tuesday evening to win 3-1 and advance to the quarter-finals of the German Cup alongside Duisburg and second division side FC Carl Zeiss Jena.

Ulm made good use of the snow which fell constantly during the game and went ahead in the fourth minute after an amateurish error by keeper Stuttgart keeper Franz Wohlfahrt. In the second half, a goal down, Stuttgart kept their cool and equalized when Zvonimir Soldo charged through the Ulm defence and shot at goal.

Jonathon Akpoborid slid in and pushed the ball over the line, although it would have made it on its own. The lead came from the boot of German international Fredi Bobic who beat the Ulm keeper in a one-on-one duel and was crowned by Krassimir Balakov who was brought down in the area

and converted the resulting penalty himself giving Stuttgart the win.

"My only wish now in the next round is that we play at home," satisfied Stuttgart coach Joachim Loew commented. Duisburg wasted many chances against second division side Eintracht Frankfurt, finally breaking the deadlock through Bachirou Salou in the 83rd minute for a 1-0 victory.

Hannover 96, winners of the German Cup in 1992 but who are now in the third division and shaken by management scandals, drew second division strugglers Jena and hosted 1-1 after extra time.

Jena went ahead in the 69th minute through Heiko Weber, but seconds before the end of regular time Jurgen Reinhardt sent the game into extra-time which saw both teams hit the cross-bar. A dramatic penalty shoot-out saw Jena emerge 5-3 victors.

Extra racing set for Vail

BEAVER CREEK, Colorado (AFP) — Frustrated downhillers are keen to finally get their first competitive start of the World Cup ski season Thursday with the first of up to four speed events at Beaver Creek.

Downhills on Thursday and Friday and at least one — possibly two — super-giant slaloms on Saturday are expected to be squeezed into the men's programme to conclude a three-week trip to North America.

The bulging schedule at this site of next winter's World Championships was brought about by a snow-and-rainout last weekend at ill-starred Whistler Mountain in Canada.

For the second consecutive year, poor weather in British Columbia forced a men's downhill series to be cancelled.

In an effort to try and maintain the race schedule during this Nagano Olympic season, Ski Federation officials transferred both downhillers to the brand new Birds of Prey piste at Beaver Creek, site of the 1999 World Championships in February.

Because of flights back across the Atlantic for next week's traditional European opening races at Val d'Isere, France, Saturday is the last day for racing in Colorado.

The competition cannot come a moment too soon for downhillers. Outside of pre-season training downhillers have had no chance to test their form due to the complete cancellation at Whistler. But that should not be the

case at Beaver Creek where the new piste awaits its first competitive outing. "The snow is ready and so are we," said Vail spokesman John Dakin, who is treating this week's racing as a run-through for the 1999 World Championships. "The guys have been getting in a lot of free skiing, but there's plenty of excitement about finally getting to race."

With Frenchman Luc Alphand — who last season became the first pure speed specialist to capture the overall World Cup crown — now retired, the chase is

on to appoint a successor in the downhill discipline, which "Lucio" won during the previous three seasons.

In the Frenchman's absence, Italy's Kristian Ghedina and Fritz Strobl from the always powerful Austrian squad, second and third in the specialty table last season, could easily lead the challenge. Team officials and organisers are still pondering whether to try and squeeze in both super-giant slaloms on Saturday or possibly shift one to Europe this month, possibly at Val d'Isere.

Pele predicts European domination

PARIS (AFP) — Soccer legend Pele believes European teams will again dominate next year's World Cup finals in France, although he thinks Brazil will win their fifth title.

"I can see Germany, France, Spain, Italy and perhaps England contending the semi-final places along with Brazil," said the Brazilian who won the first of his three World Cups as a 17-year-old in 1958 when Brazil became the only country to win the tournament outside their own continent.

Seven of the eight quarter-finalists in the United States in 1994 were European sides.

"Neither Germany nor Italy are playing well now but you have always got to respect them. They always seem to get it right on the day," he said.

"Spain have been right to stick to the same basic lineup, bringing in players like Raul, who could be the player of 1998, and England have made enormous progress under Glenn Hoddle. They have at last learnt to be patient," said the player who rates the late Bobby Moore as the best defender he played against.

He thought Brazil's biggest problem was the fact they have only played friendly matches — apart from the 1996 Copa America — since their triumph in USA 94.

"And Zagallo still hasn't decided on his defence and midfield," he said of the Brazil coach Mario Zagallo who played alongside Pele in the 1958 and 1962 World Cups and managed Pele's glorious 1970-winning side.

"At the moment we have some great indi-

vidual players but we don't have a team," he said.

Pele believed South Africa and Yugoslavia could spring a surprise.

"I just have the feeling South Africa could do a Cameroon," he said, referring to Cameroon's 1990 exploits when Roger Milla led them to a marvellous quarter-final defeat against England.

The man who symbolises the romance in football regretted the way modern football had developed.

"When I played we tried to work out ways to score goals. Now teams spend their time working out how to stop goals," he said.

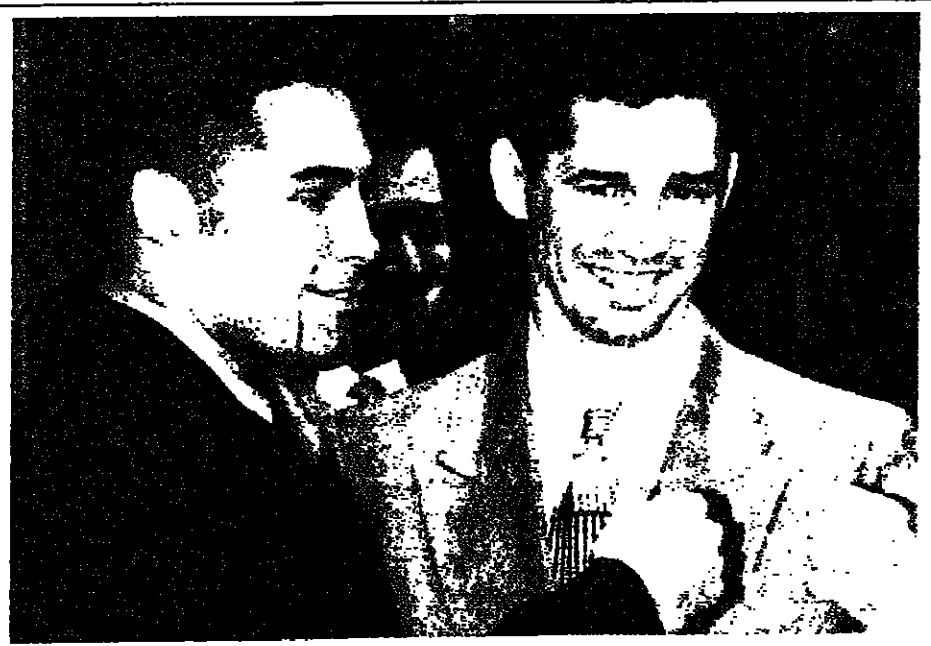
He had two proposals to make to the rule makers — ban the defensive wall at free-kicks and bring in kick-ins for throw-ins.

Pele refused to be drawn into the argument over FIFA president Joao Havelange refusing to invite him for Thursday's draw.

Pele has made it his aim as Sports Minister of Brazil to clean out the corruption in Brazilian football and denounced Brazilian football confederation head Ricardo Teixeira who is Havelange's son-in-law.

He said he expected to watch the draw on television from his hotel room in Marseille. But he did have one message for FIFA who will elect a successor to Havelange here.

"So far they have proved very successful at making money. Now it's time they started seriously to invest in underprivileged communities. They have got to put the money back into the grass roots — the poor children," he said.



Four-time world boxing champion Oscar de la Hoya (L) of East Los Angeles, California, poses with challenger Wilfredo Rivera of Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico at a press conference in New York held to promote their December 6 World Boxing Council Welterweight Championship fight in Atlantic City (Reuters photo)

PHILADELPHIA "1" Chris O'Donnell & Jene Hackman ... in THE CHAMBER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PHILADELPHIA "2" Charles Grodin ... in BEETHOVEN'S 2ND Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15 THE BEAUTICIAN & THE BEAST Shows: 8:30, 10:30	PLAZA Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi ... in AL MASEER (Arabic) Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:15, 10:30	CONCORD Rowan Atkinson ... in MR. BEAN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 SLEEP WALKERS Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only	GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN Mel Gibson & Julia Roberts ... in CONSPIRACY THEORY Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi ... in AL MASEER (Arabic) Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45	Risham Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155 NOW ON DAILY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas For a complete list of shows, call 625155
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SPOR

Rottweiler stalls tr

NORTH Scotland (AFP) — St. John's Rottweiler, Karlstrand, has been named as the winner of the Rottweiler World Cup. Karlstrand had been named as the winner of the Rottweiler World Cup. Karlstrand had been named as the winner of the Rottweiler World Cup. Karlstrand had been named as the winner of the Rottweiler World Cup.

Stewart rejects alle

LONDON (AFP) — Jackie Stewart, who won the 1973 Formula One World Championship, has rejected an offer to become a pundit for the BBC's Formula One coverage. Stewart, who won the 1973 Formula One World Championship, has rejected an offer to become a pundit for the BBC's Formula One coverage. Stewart, who won the 1973 Formula One World Championship, has rejected an offer to become a pundit for the BBC's Formula One coverage.

Pele gets royal praise

LONDON (AFP) — Queen Elizabeth II has paid tribute to Brazilian soccer legend Pele, who won the World Cup in 1958, 1962 and 1970. The Queen praised Pele's "extraordinary talent and dedication to his sport." Pele, who won the World Cup in 1958, 1962 and 1970, has been named as the winner of the Rottweiler World Cup.

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Durie to represent Scots

NEWCASTLE (AFP) — Scotland's striker Durie was named as the replacement for manager Alex Ferguson's only for Scotland. Durie was named as the replacement for manager Alex Ferguson's only for Scotland. Durie was named as the replacement for manager Alex Ferguson's only for Scotland.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Rottweiler stalls transfer

PERTH, Scotland (AFP) — Swedish striker Lars Gunnar Karlstrand is stalling over a move to St Johnstone — because he does not want to leave his rottweiler Ted in Sweden. Karlstrand had been all set for a transfer to the Scottish Premier division side before discovering that Britain's strict quarantine rules would separate him from his beloved pet. Karlstrand said: "I don't want to leave Ted in Sweden — he's very precious to me. Hopefully I can get something sorted out." Karlstrand is currently playing with Swedish premier division side Vastera Frolunda, but is out of contract from Monday.

Stewart rejects allegations

LONDON (AFP) — Jackie Stewart on Tuesday hit out at speculation that his Formula One team is in financial trouble. The rumours began after motor sport's world governing body, FIA, asked Stewart to confirm it could meet the financial requirements needed to compete in next season's world championship. That followed the team's loss of its five million pound-a-year (\$8 million) sponsorship deal with the Malaysian Government because of the financial crisis in the Far East. But the former world champion, whose saw his Ford-powered teammark its debut season last year with second place in the Monaco Grand Prix, insisted he planned to expand for the coming campaign. "Our team has available to it financial resources considerably superior to those of the 1997 season," said Stewart. "Stewart-Ford has also one of the most enviable group of blue-chip companies as sponsors and partners and their number will increase in 1998. "We are committed to a major investment in new premises and we will also be starting a test team. "All of these are positive signs which make it impossible for us to understand why the FIA thought it appropriate to ask for re-assurances from us."

Pele gets royal praise

LONDON (AFP) — Queen Elizabeth II on Tuesday paid tribute to Brazilian football legend Pele, but said she would not be wishing too much luck on Brazil in the 1998 World Cup finals. Speaking at a Buckingham Palace state banquet in honour of Brazil's President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the Queen said: "We share, too, a passion for sport and look forward to a visit to London this week from the incomparable Pele. "We also look forward

to next summer when Brazil, England and Scotland will join the other finalists in the 1998 World Cup in France." She told President Cardoso, who was beginning a four-day state visit to Britain: "You will, I hope, understand if I stop short of wishing the Brazilian team too much luck in their defence of their title as World Champions which they won, and which they carry with such distinction."

United chase Salas

MANCHESTER (AFP) — Manchester United will have another look at Chilean international striker Marcelo Salas before the end of the month. United scout Martin Ferguson, who is the younger brother of manager Alex Ferguson, is likely to fly to South America to see the 22-year-old play for Argentine club side River Plate. River Plate have six more games to play before their season finishes on December 21. Ferguson junior was the first United representative to see the £13 million rated (about \$21 million) hitman in action for Chile against Argentina in the autumn. United's assistant manager Brian Kidd then watched Salas play before the United manager checked him out last month. Italian first division outfits Parma and Lazio are also believed to be tracking Salas.

Larsson's car explodes

VAEXJOE, Sweden (AFP) — Magnus Larsson, who has just won the Davis Cup tennis title, found a car he had rented blown up in front of his house here, according to Swedish television on Tuesday. The explosive charge was placed underneath the vehicle, a Ford, which was seriously damaged. "I heard the explosion. I went out and saw my car looking really dirty," Larsson told public station TV2. Larsson was part of the Swedish team which beat the USA 5-0 in the Davis Cup final at Gothenburg at the weekend.

Valencia president quits

VALENCIA (AFP) — Valencia president Francisco Roig resigned on Tuesday because of poor results this season. Roig, who has been at the helm since March 9 1994, will be replaced by Pedro Cortes Garcia, who moves up from vice president. Valencia are currently in 18th spot in the Spanish championship.

Bogarde joins Barcelona

MILAN (AFP) — AC Milan have sold Dutch defender Winston Bogarde to Barcelona, the Italian club announced on Tuesday.

Bogarde, who never established himself here after joining from Ajax Amsterdam just four months ago, is believed to have moved for around four billion lira (\$2.25 million).

The deal echoes one made over the summer which saw Milan's Dutch defender Michael Reiziger and French striker Christophe Dugarry both join the Catalan club.

Of Milan's two remaining Dutch players, midfielder Edgar Davids is expected to sign for Juventus later this week after securing a golden handshake, while a replacement is actively being sought for disappointing striker Patrick Kluivert.

Ullrich at Telekom till 2001

BAD NEUENAU, Germany (AFP) — Germany's Tour de France champion Jan Ullrich has extended his contract with the Deutsche Telekom team by three years till 2001.

Team director Walter Godefroot has also negotiated a new contract till 2001.

Arab Handball Champions Cup opens with 10 teams taking part

Egypt's Ahli beat Jordan's Salt in opening match

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Under the patronage of HRH Princess Sumayya, the 2nd Arab Handball Champions Cup kicked off Wednesday with ten teams taking part in the Dec. 3-13 event.

Three times Arab Handball Champions Cup titleholders, Egypt's Ahli, crushed Jordan's Al Salt 30-18 (15-7) in the opening match of the championship at Al Hussein Sports City's Sports Palace.

Two teams — Al Salt and Al Arabi — are representing Jordan in the 10-day championship. The ten competing teams are playing in two groups:

Group A: Egypt's Ahli, Qatar's Qatar, United Arab Emirates' Al Ahli, Jordan's Al Salt and Lebanon's Al Sadaqah. Group B: Jordan's Al Arabi, Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli, Egypt's Al Olympi, Qatar's Al

Thursday-Friday schedule of matches

Jordan's Al Arabi vs. Qatar's Al Rayan	Dec. 4
S Arabia's Al Ahli vs. Egypt's Al Olympi	Dec. 4
Lebanon's Al Sadaqah vs. UAE's Al Ahli	Dec. 4
Kuwait's Al Qadissieh vs. Egypt's Al Olympi	Dec. 5
Jordan's Al Arabi vs. Arabia's Al Ahli	Dec. 5
Egypt's Al Ahli vs. Qatar's Qatar	Dec. 5

Rayan and Kuwait's Al Qadissieh.

Qatar played UAE's Al Ahli in Wednesday's late match.

The defeat of Jordan's Al Salt against Al Ahli was inevitable since many of their players were world championship finalists.

Al Ahli scored early on although Al Salt seemed determined to stand tall against their opponents' direct and strong shots.

The two teams tied for the first time in 10th minute thanks to Al Salt's Jihad Qtaishat who

gave his team a 5-3 lead.

Al Ahli looked confused against Al Salt's resistance and tried to organise their passes.

Al Salt's goalkeeper Nael Ghazi deserved to be called the star of the match for his heroic saves against the unstoppable Ahli attacks.

The Egyptian team ended the first half 15-7.

In the second half, Al Salt looked weak and their passes inaccurate.

The match witnessed rough play from both teams which made the referee suspend players.

Al Ahli, however, regained their confidence and kept the river of goals flowing to end the match 30-18.

Throughout the upcoming week, handball fans will have the chance to see the best of the Arab World's handball teams competing for the title.

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San Antonio	90	New York	84
Orlando	89	Portland	83

Durie to represent Scots

GLASGOW (AFP) — Rangers striker Gordon Durie on Wednesday was named as a late replacement in the European team to face the Rest of the World in Thursday's gala match before the World Cup draw in Marseille. Skipper Gary McAllister was originally first choice but he was ruled out because of a knee injury, picked up playing for Coventry against Leicester last Saturday. Then Celtic striker Darren Jackson was named as his replacement by manager Craig Brown only for Parkhead coach Wim Jansen to block the move. Brown was anxious to bring in someone even at the 11th hour as he did not want Scotland to be the only competing nation in the finals not to be represented at the match. Durie, 33, had a good qualifying campaign and celebrated his 38th international appearance by scoring in the 2-1 defeat by France in a friendly in St Etienne last month.

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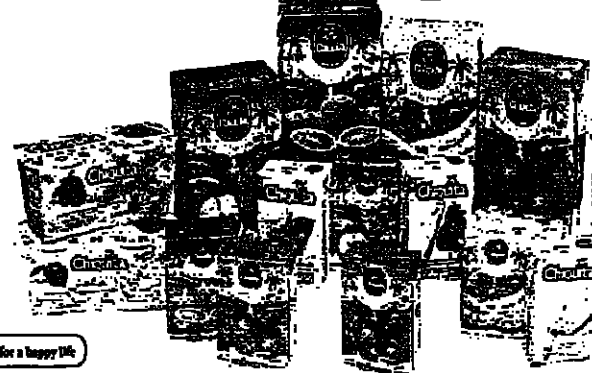
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Jordan, Iran seek to improve ties after years of estrangement

By Alia A. Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Despite a recent growing rapprochement between Jordan and Iran, bilateral political ties are likely to remain cool because of differences over Middle East peace and other strategic regional issues, Jordanian officials and analysts say.

Though trade, cultural, and religious links have received a strong boost over the last years, the mistrust that has clouded ties since the 1979 Islamic revolution and the subsequent Iran-Iraq war, is likely to continue for a while.

"If there is an intention to improve relations, this will predominantly be on the trade level," an Iranian specialist told the Jordan Times, "but political contacts will remain cautious."

Despite widespread media speculation that His Majesty King Hussein was to head Jordan's team to the Dec. 9-11 Islamic summit in Tehran, the government announced on Tuesday that His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan will lead the delegation. It will be the first such high-level visit to Iran since the revolution that toppled Shah Reza Pahlavi, once Jordan's avowed ally.

The make-up of the team — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Senate

Speaker Zeid Rifai and the ministers of religious, trade and foreign affairs — reflects Jordan's desire to boost economic and religious links and to gradually improve political ties.

However, another Jordanian political source cautioned against reading too much into the Crown Prince's visit. "First and foremost, he is going to Iran to attend the Islamic conference. And true there is a political gesture that is being sent to the Iranians, but this is secondary," he maintains.

Jordanian-Iranian ties have been marred by nearly 20 years of deep mutual mistrust because of opposing political positions on major regional issues: the 1980-1988 Iraq-Iran war, Arab-Israeli peace and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over three disputed Gulf islands. Arab states have long urged Tehran to end its occupation of these islands.

Iran has also been angered by Amman's tacit agreement to allow the anti-Iran Mujahadeen Khalq group to have a presence in Jordan and maintain media contacts. Official sources say activity by the Mujahadeen in the Kingdom remains unofficial.

Jordan and Iran suspended political ties in 1980 after Amman announced it

was backing Baghdad in its war with Tehran. However, Iran had an "interest section" working under the Pakistani flag throughout the official suspension of relations.

Despite the resumption of ties in 1991, political relations remained tense and contacts have been kept to a minimum.

The appointment of Mr. Ahmed Destamajchian, Iran's first ambassador to Jordan after both countries resumed ties, raised eyebrows because of his reported role in helping set up the pro-Iranian Muslim Hizbollah Party in Lebanon while he served at his country's mission there in the early 1980s.

Tension re-surfaced after Jordan signed its peace treaty with Israel in 1994 and climaxed a year later when both capitals entered a diplomatic tug-of-war and expelled diplomats claiming they were engaged in "undiplomatic activities."

But many Iranian observers in the Kingdom claim that the Palace has been careful to maintain some form of contact with Iran despite tough anti-Iranian stands by successive governments.

And Prince Hassan has on many occasions gone out of his way to stress the need to accept Iran as a regional player and to criticise the American policy of "dual

containment" (of Iraq and Iran).

The descent of Jordan's Royal Family from the Prophet Mohammed, and the Crown Prince's interest in promoting Muslim issues have helped win the regime a soft spot in Iranian strategic thinking. This, analysts say, was evident in Tehran's decision not to cut relations with Amman after Jordan signed the treaty with Israel.

Officials and analysts agree that Iran has been initiating gestures to warm relations with Jordan since 1991, but Amman has so far

NEWS ANALYSIS

remained cautious.

They say the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988, Iran's political isolation in the region, Arab backing of the five-year-old Middle East peace process, and the May victory of Iranian President Mohammed Khatami were factors that prompted Iran to re-think its policies towards the Arab states, including Jordan.

His Majesty King Hussein cabled Mr. Khatami after his landslide victory referring to him as "our cousin" and wishing him success.

On Jordan's part, there has been a gradual realisation over the past three years among some segments of the Jordanian bureaucracy and security

apparatus that improving Jordanian-Iranian ties would also be in Jordan's strategic interest, especially on the trade level, one source says. However, others disagree and say even if there has been a change of heart, it has not been more than skin deep.

Some analysts say two factors continue to limit improvement in ties with Iran — its perceived backing of terrorist activities, albeit indirectly, aimed at destabilising Jordan — a charge persistently denied by Tehran — and its strong opposition to Arab-Israeli peace.

"Until there is a conviction among officials and the security establishment that Iran has stopped attempts to meddle in Arab states' internal affairs and to wreck the peace process by backing terrorism in the region, relations will remain cool," says a source.

Other analysts have rejected such assumptions saying Iran is not interested in harming Jordan. "Iran has no interest in destabilising Jordan, and is fully aware of the regime's legitimacy in the eyes of its people," maintains one source.

However, others maintain that on the regional level, Iran continues to have a strong interest in seeing the peace process falter.

"If the process resumes and there is movement on

the Syrian and Lebanese peace tracks, then Hizbollah would eventually have to be disbanded, and Iran would be stripped of any oversized role in the Middle East."

However, the question remains: how can Iran and Jordan reconcile attempts at moving closer politically while maintaining opposing stands on the peace process?

Some say Jordan cannot make major strides towards Iran in the absence of collective Arab and international efforts to open up to Tehran.

Analysts say Jordan will continue to find itself in a tough position trying to juggle priorities now that it has gone out on a limb to cement its fragile peace treaty with Israel and move peace on other Arab tracks. It also enjoys close links with the United States, Iran's key Western foe.

But analysts agree that Iran has showed great flexibility towards Jordan. It made an exception by keeping its envoy in Jordan after Amman signed the treaty, though it recalled its ambassador to Egypt after Cairo made peace with Israel in 1979.

And while it has used the harshest of words to condemn Israeli-Palestinian peace deals, it has shown greater tolerance to Jordan's peace deal, although occasionally criticising it, the

analysts say.

This, however, does not signal Iranian acceptance of Jordan's policy of normalising ties with Israel, officials and analysts say.

"Statements by Iranian sources indicate that there is greater pragmatism on behalf of Tehran, and a growing awareness of Jordan's vulnerable geopolitical position in the region," one politician maintains.

"Jordan is a small country, with a small population and has a small military," he says. "It has the longest border with Israel and has its own national security policies and interests to pursue. These are all considerations that have recently come into play in Iranian thinking in relation to the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty," continues the source.

Some analysts say Mr. Destamajchian, the former ambassador to Jordan, also played an instrumental role in explaining Jordan's predicament to his government after it signed the controversial treaty.

But most analysts agree there is a golden opportunity for Jordanian-Iranian links to improve. "In Iran, the people are moving away from the idea of a permanent Islamic revolution... The election of Khatami was a clear indication of that."



Jordan gives away free Christmas trees

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordan has announced it will give away free Christmas trees to people wanting to celebrate the festive season. The Arabic daily Al Aswaaq reported Wednesday. "The Department [of Forestry] will distribute Christmas trees... some of them for free and potted trees at a nominal charge," said Musa Al Abadi, from the Ministry of Agriculture. He also called on Jordanians not to cut down trees themselves, reminding them that unauthorised felling is an offence punishable by large fines. Jordan has a small minority Christian population but Christmas is being celebrated by a growing number of Jordanians of all creeds.

69-year-old lord marries Filipina cleaner

LONDON (AFP) — A 69-year-old English lord has married his Filipina cleaning lady and is about to become a father again, according to The Sun. Alma Pasqual, born into a penniless family in a run-down village near Manila, is now officially the new Lady Southampton and expecting their child. The peer, who has two children in their 40s, told the paper: "Alma has given me a new lease of life." But he added that he hoped she would take responsibility for nappy-changing and late-night feeds as he felt "a bit out of practice."

Vietnamese ditch Tamagotchi in favour of the real thing

HANOI (R) — Asia's craze for Japanese virtual pets, known as Tamagotchi, has taken a new twist in Vietnam where schoolchildren are ditching high technology and high costs in favour of the real thing. A Ho Chi Minh City newspaper reported on Wednesday booming sales to children of tiny newly hatched birds, which it said were disrupting classes in the southern city. Just like the hand-held Japanese computer game, the pet grows and tweets when it needs attention or food — and dies if neglected. Novel concept. The tiny birds cost around 25 cents each. The local price of the electronic alternative is around \$30.

Britain's Formula One racing driver Damon Hill admits drink driving

LONDON (AFP) — Former Formula One motor racing world champion Damon Hill admitted he has driven while drunk at the launch of a police drive to cut drink-driving at Christmas in London. Several reports detailed Wednesday how Hill said at a press conference: "I have done it and everyone does it, and we all know it's wrong to do it." He said it was "by the grace of God" that he had not had an accident. Britain's police officers want to reduce the country's drink driving limit by a third to fall into line with other countries in Europe, and their campaign urges drivers not to drink at all.

Liz Hurley wins libel case

LONDON (AFP) — Actress Liz Hurley won substantial damages Wednesday from the Mirror tabloid daily over an article last year claiming that she was available to any man for \$19,200. Lawyers for the paper apologised unreservedly in the High Court here over the allegation, which they said they accepted to be untrue. The article finished off with a lewd comparison between her and prostitute Divine Brown, caught in a compromising position with Hurley's actor boyfriend Hugh Grant last year.

U.S. rejects floated Israeli proposal for West Bank troop withdrawal

Combined agency dispatches

THE STATE Department rejected Wednesday Israeli proposals for a partial withdrawal from the West Bank as outlined in the media but said Palestinian demands were also unrealistic.

"Some of the floated numbers in the media out of Israel were obviously too low and similarly some of the floated numbers out of the Palestinian sides were obviously unrealistically high," State Department spokesman James Rubin said.

The Israeli media said two main proposals were being studied by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his aides concerning both the planned redeployment and Israel's ideas for a final status agreement concerning Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank.

Leaks of the various proposals, given wide coverage in the Israeli press, showed that Mr. Netanyahu was prepared to yield less than 10 per cent of the West Bank, far below the 60 per cent the Palestinians say they should receive under U.S.-backed interim peace accords.

Mr. Netanyahu met with his top ministers Wednesday to thrash out details of a limited withdrawal from more of the West Bank which he hopes to sell to world leaders later in the week.

Mr. Netanyahu was slated to depart Thursday for Europe for talks with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and French and German leaders in an effort to "market" the peace initiative and get the international community to pressure the Palestinians to accept it.

In deciding the scope of the withdrawal, the ministers were also expected to work out the government's position on the size of the Palestinian entity to be decided in final status talks, officials said.

Mr. Netanyahu on Sunday obtained broad support in his

right-wing cabinet for the principle of a further West Bank withdrawal because ministers were given no details concerning the scope and timing of the pullback and the offer was linked to a series of tough demands on the Palestinians.

Mr. Netanyahu brought together on Wednesday his hawkish National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon and the more moderate Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Foreign Minister David Levy to hammer out details of the pullback and discuss outlines for a final peace settlement with the Palestinians.

Abundant press reports on the proposals to be presented showed them all granting the Palestinians less than 50 per cent of the West Bank as part of a final settlement — positions seen as patently unacceptable to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Army Radio said Mr. Mordechai's plan for the one-time troop pullback to be offered at the outset of the final status talks would grant Palestinians control of an additional eight per cent of the West Bank, creating blocks of self-rule around the cities of Jenin, Nablus and Hebron.

The radio said the defence minister's proposal would not link up the various Palestinian-controlled enclaves in the West Bank, 70 per cent of which is still under full Israeli control. Mr. Sharon supports allowing the Palestinians control over more continuous territory on condition they accept a smaller withdrawal at this stage, the radio said.

The Palestinians now have exclusive control over main West Bank towns and cities comprising 3 per cent of the territory. They have civilian authority over another 24 per cent where Israel's army retains security control.

Mr. Netanyahu is slated to present a final proposal on the scope and timetable of the pullout to the cabinet on

Sunday, but a final decision is not expected until later in the month.

In an effort to counter outspoken Palestinian opposition to the limited withdrawals, Mr. Netanyahu spoke this week with Ms. Albright and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, telling the British premier it was "important that Europe maintain a positive approach" to the peace process.

He will travel to Germany Thursday to meet with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and is to meet Ms. Albright in Paris on Friday and French President Jacques Chirac on Saturday.

Washington has demanded a "significant and credible" Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank.

International opinion is currently focused against Israel for the faltering peace process

deadlocked largely over Israeli settlement policies and failures to implement interim peace accords.

Under the interim accords backed by the United States, Israel is required to carry out three successive withdrawals by mid-1998 but is already late on the first two.

Mr. Netanyahu has proposed combining the first and second pullback on condition the Palestinians renounce the third withdrawal and enter into accelerated negotiations on a final peace settlement.

The proposal also requires that before the withdrawal the Palestinians crack down on Islamists responsible for bombings in Israel and extradite Palestinians wanted for killing Israelis.

The Palestinians have so far stood by their demand Israel carry out all three troop withdrawals.

If pushed, Netanyahu opts for Jerusalem over peace

BONN (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has given a clear signal that he would ditch the peace process rather than abandon sovereignty over Jerusalem, the German weekly publication Die Zeit reported.

In an interview with Die Zeit, to be published Thursday, Mr. Netanyahu confirmed that he did not intend giving way on the sovereignty of Arab east Jerusalem, occupied by Israel in 1967 and which the Palestinians claim is their capital.

"There are red lines which we cannot cross," Mr. Netanyahu told Die Zeit, adding that "this is not about east Jerusalem but about a unified Jerusalem."

"Jerusalem will remain unified in Israel and the religious freedom allowed which has always been preserved in Israel — will be formalised," he continued.

Mr. Netanyahu reinforced his firm stance on the city in an anecdote about a member of his government who said at a meeting with Palestinian officials: "If you ask me to choose between Jerusalem and peace, I would choose Jerusalem."

In the interview, the Israeli prime minister, who is to meet German Chancellor Helmut Kohl

Thursday, defended his view that the peace process should be boosted.

"Given the point we are currently at, it is easier to reach a global solution rather than inching slowly towards an interim solution," Mr. Netanyahu said.

Mr. Netanyahu signalled that the next two troop withdrawals could be carried out at once, "if the Palestinians demonstrate over the next five months that they respect their commitments to peace."

But he said intermediate steps could still be made towards negotiating "once and for all" a final peace agreement.

Mr. Netanyahu met with top ministers Wednesday to finalise a limited withdrawal from more of the West Bank, a plan which he hopes to "sell" to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and French and German leaders when he meets them for talks in Europe beginning Thursday.

The Israeli premier hoped to persuade Mr. Kohl to influence U.S. President Bill Clinton, who refused to meet Mr. Netanyahu during his recent visit to the U.S. He will travel to Germany Thursday to meet with Chancellor Kohl and is to meet Ms. Albright in Paris on Friday and French President Jacques Chirac on Saturday.

Iraq threatens to suspend oil exports unless U.N. approves distribution plan

UNITED NATIONS (AFP)

— Iraq stepped up pressure on the U.N. Security Council Tuesday as Baghdad's ambassador threatened to suspend oil exports allowed under a humanitarian deal.

The Iraqi threat to stop oil exports at the end of the week came as the 15-member Security Council prepared to renew the year-old oil-for-food arrangement. Its current second round expires Friday.

"We think that Iraq could not start exporting its oil before the approval of the [U.N.] secretary general of the distribution plan," Iraqi Ambassador Nizar Hamdoun told reporters in New York.

Mr. Hamdoun hinted that Iraq's decision on suspending the oil sales for a second time depended on the outcome of the Security Council discussions.

"The distribution plan will be discussed and finalised based on what the Security Council comes up with," he said.

Iraq suspended its oil exports under the oil-for-food scheme from June 17 to Aug. 14 to protest delays in the arrival of humanitarian supplies for the sanctions-hit Iraqi people.

Baghdad blames Washington and London, the hardliners in the U.N. Security Council, for delays by the U.N. Sanctions Committee in expediting the approval of humanitarian contracts.

Under the oil-for-food deal, Iraq is allowed to export \$2 billion worth of oil every six months in return for food and medical sup-

plies.

The top U.N. official responsible for the oil-for-food programme, Benon Sevan, said Tuesday Iraq objected to its obligation to provide the oil in a six-month period while "there doesn't seem to be an obligation to others" to comply on time.

He acknowledged that almost 80 contracts from the first six-month period were still awaiting approval from the Sanctions Committee which groups all the Security Council members.

But he insisted that "it would be wrong to put all the blame on 661 [sanctions] committee. It's very easy to blame others."

Mr. Sevan also said that the distribution plan was not yet ready "because there were a number of conditions put by the government of Iraq among others."

"So I think that in the coming few weeks we will have some difficult times in trying to expedite matters," Mr. Sevan said.

The Security Council is to vote Thursday on a draft resolution providing for the arrangement's extension at current levels, while expressing readiness to increase the allocations at a later stage.

Mr. Sevan stressed that there was no connection between the crisis involving U.N. arms inspectors of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM), and the oil-for-food deal.

"There is one thing which is clear, the distinction everybody's made between UNSCOM operations and this programme," he said. However, Western diplo-

mats have acknowledged that because of the crisis over the weapons inspections, there would have been a problem in agreeing to increase the oil-for-food deal at a time when Iraq is still blocking the U.N. inspectors.

The United States in particular, which informally raised the possibility of increasing the oil-for-food deal to \$3 billion, does not wish to show any sign of concession to Iraq's President Saddam Hussein at this time.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan in a report to the Security Council released on Monday called for the oil-for-food deal to be increased, expressing concern about malnutrition among Iraqi children suffering from the seven-year-old sanctions.

But he did not make specific recommendations, after removing a reference to the three-billion figure in an earlier draft.

His Baghdad representative Denis Halliday wrote a letter saying "it is time to put a stop to the political interference in this humanitarian assistance programme."

Also Tuesday, the Security Council agreed on a U.S.-Russian draft statement calling for "unimpeded access" for U.N. weapons inspectors in Iraq. The draft is to be adopted on Wednesday.

U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard said that UNSCOM Chairman Richard Butler would head for Baghdad at the weekend to discuss arrangements after Russia defused a three-week crisis with Iraq over the U.N. inspections.



SANTA'S HIGH KICK: Santa does a high kick flanked by the Radio City Rockettes as they perform in the ice skating rink at New York's Rockefeller Plaza shortly before the 26,000 lights decorating the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree were switched on Tuesday night. The 74-foot Norway spruce came from Stony Point, N.Y. (AP photo)

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